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MEMOIRS
OF
CELEBRATED FEMALE SOVEREIGNS.

By my troth

I would not be a queen!—

Verily,

I swear 'tis better to be lowly born
And range with humble livers in content,
Than to be perk'd up in a glistening grief,
And wear a golden sorrow.'

King Henry VIII. Act ii. Sc. 3.

Mary Ann



MEMOIRS

OF

CELEBRATED

FEMALE SOVEREIGNS.

BY MRS. JAMESON,

AUTHORESS OF "THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN."

FOURTH EDITION.

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PREFACE.

THE intention of this work is to present in a small compass and at one view, an idea of the influence which a female government has had, *generally*, on men and nations, and of the influence which the possession of power has had *individually* on the female character. If it should be criticised as being too brief, perhaps it will also be recollected, that it would have been far easier to write such a work in twenty volumes than in two ; but in that case, “the latter end of the history would certainly have forgotten the beginning ;” and the principal object, that of presenting a general *coup d’œil* which might be grasped by the mind at once, would have been defeated altogether.

Perhaps the title of the work should have been properly, “Comparative Sketches,” or “Memorials,” of celebrated Female Sovereigns, rather than *Memoirs* : for the didactic form of history or biography has not always been adhered to ; incidents and characters are not here treated in a political and historical, but in a moral and picturesque point of view ; and public affairs and national events, which are detailed in the usual works of authority, are not dwelt

upon except as connected with the destiny, or emanating from the personal and private character, the passions and prejudices of the individual sovereign.

From the ideas which I know to be entertained by well-informed persons, it should seem that the manner in which we are *driven* through a course of history as part of our early education might be amended ; the memory is loaded to repletion with facts, dates, and names ; meantime, some of the best faculties of the mind, which might well be exercised on these subjects, remain dormant ; the natural judgment is surrendered to mere words, producing prejudices and false associations which tinge our feelings and opinions during our whole lives. It may be added, that the moral sense runs some risk of being perverted by the manner in which we misapply habitually and by prescriptive custom certain epithets. For why, it may be asked, are victories always *glorious*, always *splendid* ? Why must our sympathies be always enlisted on the side of successful ambition ? Why must criminal or all-grasping power be ever exhibited under an aspect of greatness, when surely there is a reverse of the impression, producing a far deeper and more useful lesson ? Why (and this is a most serious evil) should the young, the pure, the feminine mind, just expanding to the sense of truth and beauty and goodness, be early polluted by relations of profligacy and cruelty, horrible and physical tortures, such as are too fully and grossly detailed in some of our most esteemed histories ? If under the idea of inspiring a just horror for these things, it is as if we should teach our children humanity

by introducing them into the shambles. Instances might be given of the painful and injurious effect produced on youthful and feeling minds by certain passages of history, stronger, more lasting, and far more baneful than by any absurd romance or fairy-tale, or any of the banished superstitions and goblins of the nursery. These reflections may seem beside the present subject, and would lead us too far. It would be presumption to say that in this little work I have been able to avoid entirely the objections to which I have alluded; but, at least, those great moral truths which are based on our religion as Christians, and lead to our best views of duty and happiness, are not lost sight of; and in estimating the characters and events which are here rapidly portrayed rather than narrated, I do not wish to dictate opinions, but, by enabling the young reader of history to recall and arrange previous impressions, to afford some new materials for thought and comparison.

There may be a difference of opinion as to whether women ought, or ought not, to be entrusted with the executive government of a country; but if, in a very complicated and artificial system of society, the rule of a woman be tolerated or legalized as a necessary evil for the purpose of avoiding worse evils arising from a disputed succession and civil commotions, then it remains a question how far the feminine character may be so modified by education, as to render its inseparable defects as little injurious to society, and its peculiar virtues as little hurtful to herself, as possible. Women, in possession of power, are so sensible of their inherent weakness, that they are always in extremes.

Hence, among the most arbitrary governments recorded are those of women. They substitute for the dominion of that superior strength, mental and physical, which belongs to the other sex, and with which should rest "all lawful rule and right supremacy," the mere force of *will*; and call that *power* which is founded in weakness. Christina of Sweden has left a memorable sentence under her own royal hand, which may serve as a commentary on the threadbare adage, "when women reign, men govern." Thus she writes—for it is but just to give her own words:—"Quand j'étais en mon royaume, j'avais nombre de conseillers et de ministres, que je consultais tous, et dont j'entendais les avis: mais moi seule je pris les résolutions de moi-même à ma façon, tant dans les grandes choses que dans les moindres affaires; et je ne requérais autre chose de mes serviteurs et ministres qu'une aveugle obéissance, avec laquelle ils exécutaient mes décrets sans réplique. J'étais seule la maîtresse absolue, et je voulais l'être, et je savais l'être par la grâce de Dieu. L'empereur, la Suède, et tout le monde savent tout cela. Il est vrai, qu'à l'heure qu'il est, j'ai changé de fortune, mais pas de sentiment. Je fais à présent en petit, ce que je faisais alors en grand,"* &c.

Ludicrous as this may sound in so many words, we have here the true feminine idea of empire, viz. the privilege of saying *je le veux*: and, however modified by the character of the individual, however dissembled—for all had not the

* Letter to Bonvisi, the Apostolic nuncio at Vienna in 1677 (*vide* Correspondance de Christine). The constitution of Sweden at the time of Christina's accession was that of a free state, or limited monarchy.

nk audacity of Christina—we may trace the same feeling, the same principle of action, in every woman who has either inherited power, or achieved political greatness; and not more in the acute Elizabeth, and the haughty, energetic Catherine, than in the stupid, heartless Anne, and the amiable Maria Theresa.

On the whole, it seems indisputable that the experiments hitherto made in the way of female government have been generally unfortunate; and that women called to empire have been, in most cases, conspicuously unhappy or criminal. So that, were we to judge by the past, it might be decided at once, that the power which belongs to us as sex, is not properly, or naturally, that of the sceptre or the sword.



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TO THE SECOND EDITION.



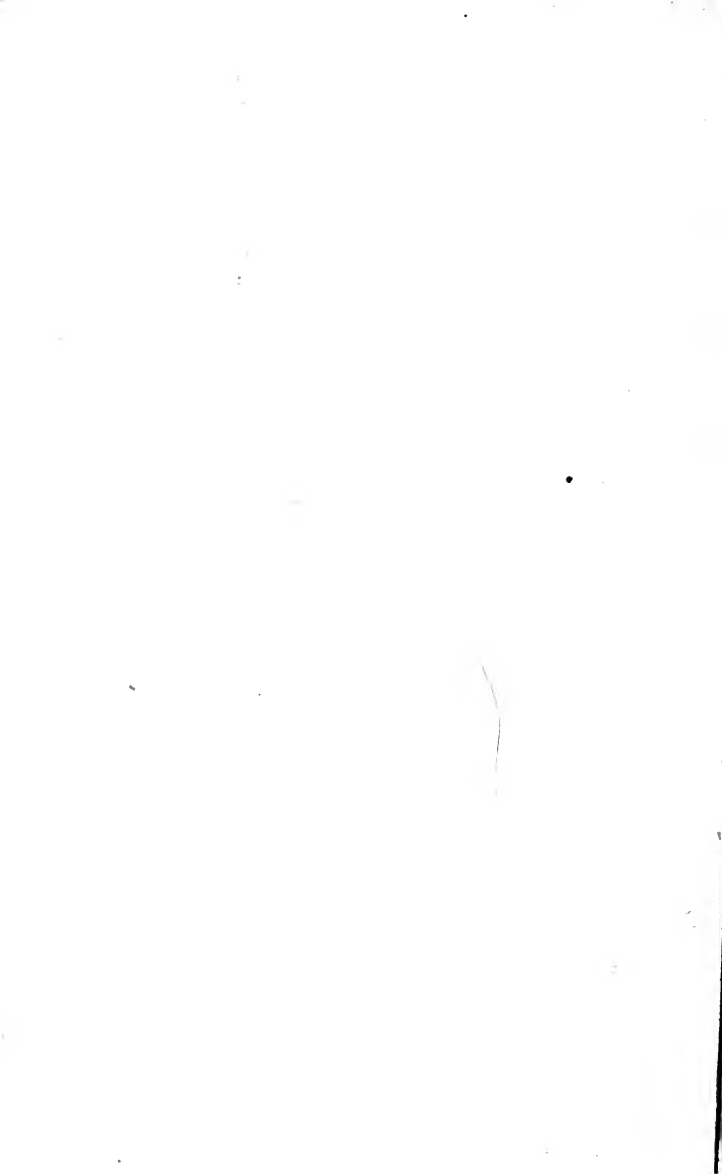
A SECOND Edition of this little work having been called for, the Author has profited by the remarks and criticisms which have been communicated to her, and has seized the opportunity to correct some inaccuracies which were pointed out, and to confirm or modify certain views and opinions of which the truth and justice had been in some cases doubted. She has carefully and conscientiously gone over the whole, with reference to the original authorities, and consulted others; and has endeavoured to render the Work in all respects more worthy of the public approbation—more adapted to youthful readers of her own sex, for whom the Work was in the first instance more especially written, and to whom the opinions and inferences it contains are distinctly addressed.

A. J.



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CELEBRATED FEMALE SOVEREIGNS.

SEMIRAMIS.

SEMIRAMIS, Queen of Assyria, is the first female sovereign upon record who ever held undivided empire. All the accounts which have come down to us concerning this celebrated Queen are mixed up with so much exaggeration, absurdity, and mythological fiction, that she may be considered partly a fabulous and partly an historical personage. As beheld through the long lapse of ages, and in the dim distance of primeval time, with all her gorgeous and Babylonish associations around her, Semiramis appears to our fancy rather as a colossal emblem of female sovereignty, overshadowing the East, than as a real and distinct individual; yet, that such a woman did once exist, is more than probable; and her name has been repeated from age to age, till it has become so illustrious, and her exploits and character so frequently alluded to in history, in poetry, and in the arts, that it is obviously necessary to be acquainted with the traditions respecting her;—though quite unnecessary to give implicit credit to the relation of events resting on such vague, remote, and doubtful testimony, that it is equally difficult to believe and impossible to confute them. The time at which Semiramis lived is a matter of dispute; and the authorities vary so extravagantly, that we are tempted to exclaim with Bryant, “What credit can possibly be given to the history of a person, the period of whose existence cannot be ascertained within 1500 years?” Yet so universal a celebrity must surely have had some foundation in truth.

According to Rollin, Semiramis flourished about 1950 years before the Christian era ; that is, about 400 years after the Flood, and nearly about the time of Abraham. Other chronologists, with far more probability, place her reign about 600 years later ; thus making her nearly contemporary with Gideon, Judge of Israel, and Theseus, King of Athens.

She was born at Ascalon, in Syria, and was the wife of Menones, one of the generals of Ninus, King of Assyria. At the siege of Bactria, whither she accompanied her husband, she distinguished herself by her prudence and courage ; and through her sagacity the city was at length taken, after a protracted siege. She discovered a weak part in the fortifications, and led some soldiers up a by-path by night, by which means the walls were scaled, and the city entered. Ninus, struck with her wisdom and her charms, entreated her husband to resign Semiramis to him, offering his daughter, the Princess Sosana, in exchange, and threatening to put out the eyes of the husband if he refused. Menones, seeing the king resolved on his purpose, and the lady in all probability nothing loth, and unable to determine between the alternatives presented to him, the loss of his eyes or the loss of his wife, hung himself in a fit of jealousy and despair, and Ninus immediately afterwards married his widow. Semiramis became the mother of a son named Ninias, and the king dying soon afterwards bequeathed to her the government of his empire during the minority of her son. We have another version of this part of the story of Semiramis, which has afforded a fine subject for poets and satirists. It is recorded that Ninus, in the extravagance of his dotage, granted to his young and beautiful queen the absolute sovereignty of his empire for a single day. He seated her on his regal throne, placed his signet on her finger, commanded the officers of state and courtiers to do her homage, himself setting the first example, and her decrees during that brief space of time were to be considered absolute and irrevocable. Semiramis, with equal subtlety and audacity, instantly took advantage of her delegated power, and ordered her husband to be first imprisoned, and then strangled ; a punishment which his folly would almost have deserved from any other hand. She declared herself his successor, and contrived to retain the

supreme power during the remainder of her life. She was twenty years of age when she assumed the reins of empire, and resolved to immortalize her name by magnificent monuments and mighty enterprises. She is said to have founded the city of Babylon, or at least to have adorned it with such prodigious and splendid works, that they ranked among the wonders of the world. When we read the accounts of the "Great Babylon," of its walls and brazen gates, its temples, bridges, and hanging gardens, we should be inclined to treat the whole as a magnificent fiction of poetry, if the stupendous monuments of human art and labour still remaining in India and Upper Egypt did not render credible the most extravagant of these descriptions, and prove on what a gigantic scale the ancients worked for immortality. We are also told that amongst the edifices erected by her was a mausoleum to the memory of the king, her husband, adjoining the great Tower of Babel, and adorned with statues of massive gold. When Semiramis had completed the adornment of her capital by the most wonderful works of art, she undertook a progress through her vast empire, and everywhere left behind her glorious memorials of her power and her benevolence. It seems to have been an article of faith amongst all the writers of antiquity, that Assyria had never been so great and so prosperous as under the dominion of this extraordinary woman. She built enormous aqueducts, connected the various cities by roads and causeways, in the construction of which she levelled hills and filled up valleys; and she was careful, like the imperial conqueror of modern times, to inscribe her name, and the praises of her own munificence, on all these monuments of her greatness. In one of these inscriptions she gives her own genealogy, in a long list of celestial progenitors; which shows that, like some other monarchs of the antique time, she had the weakness to disown her plebeian origin, and wished to lay claim to a divine and fictitious parentage.

"My father was Jupiter Belus;
 My grandfather, Babylonian Saturn;
 My great-grandfather, Ethiopian Saturn;
 My great-grandfather's father, Egyptian Saturn;
 And my great-grandfather's grandfather,
 Phoenix Coelus Ogyes."

After reading this high-sounding catalogue of grandfathers and great-grandfathers, it is amusing to recollect that Semiramis has left posterity in some doubt whether she herself ever had a real existence, and may not be, after all, as imaginary a personage as any of her shadowy, heaven-sprung ancestors.

There is another of the inscriptions of Semiramis, which is in a much finer spirit.

“Nature bestowed on me the form of a woman; my actions have surpassed those of the most valiant of men. I ruled the empire of Ninus, which stretched eastward as far as the river Hyhanam; southwards to the land of incense and of myrrh; and northwards to the country of the Scythians and the Sogdians. Before me, no Assyrian had seen the great sea: I beheld with my own eyes four seas, and their shores acknowledged my power. I constrained the mighty rivers to flow according to my will, and I led their waters to fertilize lands that had been before barren and without inhabitants. I raised impregnable towers, I constructed paved roads in ways hitherto untrodden but by the beasts of the forest, and in the midst of these mighty works I found time for pleasure and for friendship.”

We are told that Semiramis was extremely active and vigilant in the administration of her affairs. One morning, as she was dressing, information was brought to her that a rebellion had broken out in the city: she immediately rushed forth, half-attired, her hair floating in disorder, appeased the tumultuous populace by her presence and her eloquence, and then returned to finish her toilette.

Not satisfied with being the foundress of mighty cities, and sovereign over the greatest empire of the earth, Semiramis was ambitious of military renown. She subdued the Medes, the Persians, the Libyans, and the Ethiopians, and afterwards determined to invade India. She is the first monarch on record who penetrated beyond the Indus;—for the expedition of Bacchus is evidently fabulous. The amount of her army appears to us absolutely incredible. She is said to have assembled three millions of foot soldiers and five hundred thousand cavalry; and as the strength of the Indians consisted principally in the number of their elephants, she caused many thousand camels to be disguised and caparisoned like elephants of war, in hopes of deceiving and terrifying the enemy by this

stratagem. Another historian informs us that she constructed machines in the shape of elephants, and that these machines were moved by some mechanical contrivance, which was worked by a single man in the interior of each. The Indian king or chief, whose name was Stabrobates, hearing of the stupendous armament which was moving against him, sent an ambassador to Semiramis, demanding who and what she was? and why, without any provocation, she was come to invade his dominions? To these very reasonable inquiries the Assyrian queen haughtily replied, "Go to your king, and tell him I will myself inform him who I am, and why I am come hither." Then rushing onwards at the head of her swarming battalions, she passed the river Indus in spite of all opposition, and advanced far into the country, the people flying before her unresisting, and apparently vanquished. But having thus insidiously led her on till she was surrounded by hostile lands, and beyond the reach of assistance from her own dominions, the Indian monarch suddenly attacked her, overwhelmed her mock elephants by the power and weight of his real ones, and completely routed her troops, who fled in all directions.

The queen herself was wounded, and only saved by the swiftness of her Arabian steed, which bore her across the Indus; and she returned to her kingdom with scarce a third of her vast army. We are not informed whether the disasters of this war cured Semiramis of her passion for military glory; and all the researches of antiquarians have not enabled us to distinguish the vague and poetical from the true or, at least, the probable events in the remainder of her story. We have no account of the state of manners and morals during her reign; and of the progress of civilization we can only judge by the great works imputed to her. Among the various accounts of her death, the following is the most probable:—An oracle had foretold that Semiramis should reign until her son Ninias conspired against her; and after her return from her Indian expedition she discovered that Ninias had been plotting her destruction. She immediately called to mind the words of the oracle, and without attempting to resist his designs, abdicated the throne at once, and retired from the world. Or, according to others, she was put to death by her son, after a

reign of forty-two years. The Assyrians paid her divine honours under the form of a pigeon.

In her private life Semiramis has been represented as a monster of profligacy. We are told that she had a succession of lovers, who were devoted one after another to death ; and that her son slew her, at length, as the only means of avoiding even a worse crime.


These accounts are rejected by other authors as fabulous. It appears, however, that among the magnificent works and great achievements imputed to Semiramis, no one virtue, no trait of feminine feeling, has been recorded by historians to redeem the portrait of this eastern conqueress, who founded cities and turned the course of rivers, from those atrocious features, which stamp her in our imagination as the "incestuous beldame," "the homicide and husband-killer" of the poets. D

Another famous Assyrian queen is recorded to have lived two or three centuries after Semiramis : her name was Nitocris. She dug a new channel for the river Euphrates, by which the navigation of the river was greatly improved : She also distinguished herself by her conquests over the neighbouring nations, and left behind her many stupendous edifices. What strikes us as most remarkable in all this is the extraordinary fact, and the only one on which we can depend, that in those early periods of the world, in countries where the women have for ages been kept either in seclusion or in slavery, and in a dynasty of kings notorious for their extreme effeminacy, two women should have held such powerful sway, and have planned and executed works of such amazing grandeur and utility.



CLEOPATRA,

QUEEN OF EGYPT.

LEOPATRA presents herself to our fancy in fine contrast with Semiramis. While the majesty of Assyria "in sceptred pall comes sweeping by," a mighty but vague impersonation of power, guilt, and grandeur, Cleopatra stands before us a vivid reality, combining with her historical and classical celebrity all the interest that poetry, romance, and the arts could throw around her. As a woman, she can scarcely be said to claim either our sympathy or our respect; as a sovereign, she neither achieved great exploits nor great conquests, nor left behind her any magnificent or enduring monuments of her power: but she has left behind her a *name*, which still acts as a spell upon the fancy. There have been five or six Cleopatras conspicuous in the dynasties of Egypt and Syria, either for their crimes or their misfortunes; but Fame seems to acknowledge but one, and with her celebrity has filled the world.

Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, was the second daughter of Ptolemy Auletes, and born in the year of Rome 683, or about sixty-nine years before the Christian era.

On the division of Alexander's empire among his generals, Egypt had fallen to the share of Ptolemy Lagus; and his posterity, all bearing the name of Ptolemy, continued to govern that country during a period of two hundred and ninety years. This dynasty of sovereigns, which had produced several wise and great princes, had been gradually degenerating, and seemed to have arrived at the lowest depth of degradation in the person of Ptolemy Auletes, of whom it is recorded, that his highest

accomplishment consisted in playing wonderfully well upon the flute. His avarice, folly, and misgovernment rendered him at length so hateful and contemptible to his people, that they drove him from the throne, and conferred the supreme power on his eldest daughter Berenice and her husband Archelaus.

Ptolemy immediately threw himself on the protection of the Romans, and Pompey, then at the head of affairs, warmly espoused the cause of the fallen monarch. Through his good offices, and the intervention of the Roman power, which was then irresistible, Ptolemy was replaced on his throne. On his return to Egypt, his first action was to put to death his daughter Berenice and her husband ; but domestic murders had become so common in the family of the Ptolemies, that this event excited neither surprise nor horror. He afterwards reigned tranquilly for four years, and dying bequeathed his throne to his second daughter Cleopatra and his eldest son Ptolemy Dionysius, who were to reign jointly as king and queen, under the guardianship of the Roman Senate.

At the time that the sovereignty of Egypt devolved on Cleopatra and her brother, she was about fourteen, and he was three or four years younger. Ptolemy was of a feeble, indolent, and vacillating temper ; Cleopatra, on the contrary, had already displayed the most extraordinary talents, which, combined with an aspiring and energetic spirit, rendered her an object of jealousy to the vile courtiers who surrounded her brother. Theodorus his tutor, Achilles his general, and Photinus his chamberlain, divided the administration among them, and succeeded in sowing dissension between the young king and queen, by infusing into the mind of Ptolemy a jealousy of his sister's superiority. At length Cleopatra, either in real or pretended fear of her life from the intrigues of these men, fled from Alexandria, and retired with her adherents into Syria.

Here the number of her friends and followers daily increased : those who were not attached to her cause from conviction, or a sense of justice, were won by those arts of blandishment in which she is said to have excelled even from her childhood ; by her persuasive eloquence, and more persuasive gifts. Her accomplishments rendered her an object of admiration, and her extreme youth of sympathy and commiseration. We are not

told who were the ministers and advisers of Cleopatra at this period ; but her measures were concerted with so much wisdom, and executed with so much energy and promptitude, that, in spite of all we are told of her precocious intellect and singular powers, we can scarcely believe them to have emanated entirely from herself. At the time of her retreat to Syria she was not more than sixteen,—an age at which a woman is sometimes a finished coquette “*par instinct*,” but seldom a bold and practised diplomatist.

She despatched in the first place ambassadors to Rome, to justify herself before the Senate, and complain of the conduct of Achilles and Photinus, whom she denounced as traitors to her government, and enemies of the Roman people ; and as at this time Pompey and Cæsar were contending for empire, she sent to Pompey, the benefactor of her family, a reinforcement of fifty galleys, manned and armed. After some time had elapsed without any answer from the Senate, Cleopatra found that the Romans were too much occupied with their own intestine dissensions to attend to the affairs of Egypt ; she therefore took her cause into her own hands, and levied an army, at the head of which she boldly marched into Egypt to claim her rights. Ptolemy, or rather his ministers (for he was then only thirteen), raised an army to oppose her, and stationed himself at Pelusium, a celebrated fortress at the entrance of the Nile. At this juncture occurred the battle of Pharsalia, which rendered Cæsar the sole and undisputed master of the vast resources of the Roman empire. Pompey, pursued, or rather conducted, by his evil destinies, fled from the plains of Thessaly, and sought a refuge in Egypt ; trusting—vainly trusting—that the favours he had formerly heaped on the family of Ptolemy would give him the strongest claim to the hospitality and protection of the Egyptians.

But the news of the battle had arrived before him, and with it the intelligence that Cæsar was pursuing his fallen adversary to the shores of Egypt. The perfidious ministers of Ptolemy resolved to abandon the weaker side and to bespeak the friendship of the conqueror by the sacrifice of his great rival : the well-known catastrophe need hardly be repeated here. Pompey was basely assassinated at the moment of his landing, and his head

and signet-ring were presented to Cæsar as the most acceptable gifts which could be offered to him, and the most expressive homage to his power. Cæsar would probably have taken signal vengeance on the murderers, if the small number of his troops had not obliged him, from prudential motives, to restrain his indignation : he contented himself, therefore, by merely issuing his commands, in the name of the Roman people, that Cleopatra and her brother should appear before him, and submit their differences to his arbitration.

Cleopatra was at this time between sixteen and seventeen : she was not, by all accounts, so beautiful in person as she was graceful and captivating in manner ; but the melody of her voice, the brightness of her smiles, the various accomplishments of her mind, and a peculiar art of adapting herself to the individual tastes and habits of those she addressed, formed that combination of charms by which she subdued all who approached her. She was fond of learning, and a patroness of learned men ; had studied with success the Greek philosophy and literature, and spoke ten different languages with equal fluency. But she had been educated in a most corrupt court, and imbibed its vices : from her childhood she had been immersed in vile intrigues, and in continual struggles for power. She was dissembling, ambitious, vain, perverse, and utterly unprincipled ; presenting a strange mixture of talent and frivolity, of firmness and caprice, of magnanimity and artifice, of royal pride and more than feminine weakness.

She had made herself well acquainted with the character of Cæsar, and she resolved not to trust only to the justice of her cause, but if possible to interest him personally in her favour before he should be called on to give judgment in her affairs. Cæsar was so surrounded by the minions of Ptolemy, that it was difficult to enter the palace, or to procure access to him in private. But to compass her object no instrument was too mean, no expedient too degrading, no sacrifice too great, though it should include that of her sex's honour, as well as of her queenly dignity. She procured the assistance of a chamberlain named Apollodorus, and he conveyed her on his back, concealed in a mattress or a bundle of linen, to the very apartment of Cæsar. If the Roman general was surprised by

this unexpected introduction, he was not less struck by the boldness and dexterity with which she had obtained access to him. But when Cleopatra threw herself, all bathed in tears, at his feet, he was no longer able to resist her. In a speech of the most artful and persuasive eloquence, she expatiated on the injustice of her enemies ; she recapitulated the injuries and indignities she had endured from the minions of her brother ; she defended herself on the plea of policy and gratitude for the assistance she had sent to Pompey, the friend of her family ; and concluded by appealing, as a defenceless woman and an injured queen, to the generosity and compassion of the Roman general. The appeal was not made in vain. Cæsar was captivated by her charms and her eloquence ; he not only promised his favour and protection, but he proffered love, and laid himself and his power at her feet. A few days after this interview, he commanded that the brother and sister should disband their respective armies, and submit entirely to his judgment. Cleopatra was well content to leave her destinies in the hands of a man who was so completely subdued to her power as to have no will but hers. But the adherents of Ptolemy were not so inclined. They exclaimed against the insolence of a man who attempted to dictate laws to them in their own capital, as if he had been their conqueror rather than their friend and ally. They could easily guess at the means by which Cleopatra had seduced her judge ; and Ptolemy, filling the city with his just complaints, excited the people of Alexandria to attack Cæsar in the palace. Many engagements took place, in which both Cleopatra and Cæsar were exposed to the most imminent dangers. The young queen showed herself worthy of the confidence and affection of Cæsar during this terrible emergency, and by her advice, her presence of mind, and her knowledge of the people and the country, rendered him the most essential services.

The insurrection was at length quelled, after many vicissitudes of fortune and much bloodshed. The famous Alexandrian library being accidentally set on fire in one of these encounters, forty thousand volumes were consumed before the conflagration was extinguished.

Two of Cleopatra's most deadly enemies had perished during

this short war : Photinus had been put to death by Cæsar, not without just provocation ; and Achilles had been murdered by the orders of Arsinoë, the younger sister of Cleopatra, who had joined the rebels against her. Ptolemy, who had given early proofs both of wickedness and weakness, was afterwards accidentally drowned by the sinking of a galley: and all Egypt submitted to the conqueror.

Tranquillity being thus restored, Cæsar undertook a progress through Egypt, in company with Cleopatra. They ascended the Nile together in the same vessel, followed by a splendid retinue ; and it is said that Cæsar would have proceeded with her beyond the Cataracts, into Ethiopia, if his veteran troops had not refused to follow him : they blushed to behold their general, who had so often led them to victory, abandoned to luxury and indolence, and completely in the power of an artful and ambitious woman. They returned, therefore, to Alexandria, and soon after Cæsar was called by the state of affairs into Armenia and Cappadocia. Previous to his departure, he caused Cleopatra and her only surviving brother, the younger Ptolemy, then about eleven years old, to be proclaimed king and queen of Egypt. His son by Cleopatra, to whom the Alexandrians had given the name of Cæsarion, he declared heir to the Egyptian crown, and then taking leave of his enchanting queen with regret, he conducted his legions against Pharnaces, King of Pontus.

Young Ptolemy died a short time afterwards ; and it is supposed by some authors that Cleopatra poisoned him either to reign alone, or to ensure the undisputed succession to her son Cæsarion. If we may judge from her character, and the frequency of such crimes in her family, she was not incapable of the atrocity imputed to her, if it would have answered any purpose. But it is fair to remark, that the accusation does not rest on historic proof ; and to cause the death of an unoffending and helpless child, without some more adequate motive, bespeaks a heart more completely hardened against the natural affections than Cleopatra ever exhibited.

During a period of twelve years, that is, from the departure of Cæsar to the rupture between Octavius and Mark Antony, Cleopatra continued to rule her kingdom in great splendour and

prosperity. Either through a natural taste for magnificence, or a belief that the vulgar are imposed on and governed by means of outward show, she never appeared in public but with the most dazzling pomp. She even assumed the habiliments and head-dress of the goddess Isis, the principal divinity of the Egyptians, and she was thus represented in her coins and statues. Very little is recorded of the life and actions of Cleopatra during this time ; but it appears incidentally that she governed in such a manner as to secure the affection and reverence of her people, and the respect of the neighbouring nations, some of whom submitted voluntarily to her power, and others chose her as the arbitress of their mutual differences. She did not attempt to extend her dominion by force of arms, but rather by policy and prudence. A disposition to violence, or even personal courage, formed no part of the character of Cleopatra ; and her ambition, though unbounded, was never warlike. She was luxurious and magnificent, but not indolent : she transacted all affairs, gave audience to ambassadors, and administered justice in person. She made a journey to Rome in the year 46 B.C. to congratulate Cæsar on his Asiatic triumphs ; and on this occasion she displayed all that profuse magnificence for which she was remarkable : she presented to Cæsar and to the Roman people gifts of extraordinary value, rare pictures, sculpture, gems, gold, and tapestries, which were deposited in the Capitol ; and Cæsar returned the compliment by placing her statue in massive gold on the right hand of Venus, in the temple of that goddess.*

Within two years of this memorable visit, Cæsar was assassinated in the Capitol. We are not told how Cleopatra received the intelligence of his fate, or whether she was deeply affected by the violent death of one who had been her friend, protector, and lover ; but it appears that about this time Sextus Pompey visited her in Egypt, where he was entertained with magnificence, and that she attached him to her interests by the same means which she had found so successful with others. Young Pompey

* I suspect, on an examination of the historical documents, that this visit to Rome is rather apocryphal ; but mention it, as it is alluded to in all the popular histories.

was at this period master of the whole Mediterranean ; his victorious and innumerable galleys swept the seas, and at a crisis when the death of Cæsar left her without a protector at Rome. Cleopatra felt all the advantage of securing such a partisan, and, as usual, was not scrupulous about the means she employed for that purpose. It was her connexion with Pompey which exposed her to the accusation of having aided the conspirators with money and arms after the death of Cæsar. This accusation, whether true or false—and one would wish for the honour of female nature to believe it false—led to the celebrated attachment between Mark Antony and Cleopatra, which ended in the destruction of both, and has rendered their names for ever inseparable in the memory of man.

The occasion of their first meeting was this :—After the battle of Philippi, in which Brutus and Cassius were defeated, Antony had taken the command of the army against the Parthians, and on leaving Greece to pass into Asia, he sent orders to Cleopatra to meet him in Cilicia, and justify herself against the accusation of having assisted Brutus and Cassius in their war against the Triumvirate. The queen prepared to obey this haughty summons, but she trusted more to her address and her personal charms than to the justice of her cause ; and being perfectly acquainted with the character of the man to whom she was about to introduce herself, did not despair of subduing Antony by the same arts which had already vanquished Cæsar. Attended by a numerous and splendid retinue, and loaded with a world of treasures and gifts, and store of gold and silver, she proceeded through Syria to meet Antony in Asia Minor ; and though she was frequently informed that he waited her arrival with impatience, she did not condescend to hasten her progress ; but mocking at his letters and messengers with a smiling grace, travelled with pomp and leisure, as one who was about to confer an honour on an inferior, rather than to obey the summons of a superior. On her arrival in Cilicia, she embarked on the river Cydnus to sail down to Tarsus ; and this triumphant and magnificent voyage has become, from the descriptions of Shakespeare and Dryden, famous in poetry as well as in history,—although poetry itself could scarcely enhance the gorgeousness of the picture. The poop of the

galley was of gold, the sails of purple silk, and the silver oars* kept time to the sound of various musical instruments, which breathed the most delicious harmony. The Queen of Egypt lay reclined on a couch, under a canopy of cloth of gold, crowned and attired like the goddess Venus, while beautiful boys, winged to represent Cupids, stood fanning her on either side; the fairest among her maids, some habited like the Nereids, and others like the Graces, were employed in the steerage and management of the vessel; altars were raised and incense was burned along the shores, which were covered with multitudes of people, who crowded to gaze on the splendid pageant, and filled the air with acclamations.

Presently a rumour was spread abroad that Venus was come to feast with Bacchus, and the whole populace of the city of Tarsus poured forth to meet and receive her. Antony invited her to supper, but she sent him word that he should rather wait upon her, that she was too fatigued to land, and would have the pleasure of receiving and entertaining him on board her galley; in short, she assumed from the first the airs not only of a queen, but of a divinity. How well she understood the temper of the man she sought to captivate by all this gorgeous display of oriental pomp and grandeur is shown by her success. Antony, like Cæsar, had begun by being her judge and the arbitrator of her fate, and he ended by becoming the veriest slave that ever was chained to a woman's footstool. At the time of his first meeting with Cleopatra the Triumvir was past the meridian of life. He was in his forty-eighth year, "of a noble presence, a graceful length of beard, an ample forehead, and an aquiline nose;" he was thought to resemble in his person the pictures and statues of Hercules, and was in fact vain of his supposed descent from that hero. In his character he was fearlessly brave, open-hearted, and magnificent, but arrogant, vindictive, and abandoned to every species of dissolute excess. He appeared

* I remember to have read somewhere, though I cannot refer to the authority, that the silver oars of Cleopatra's barge were pierced at the extremities with holes of different sizes, and so mechanically contrived, that the water, as it flowed through them at every stroke, produced a harmony in concord with that of the flutes and lyres on board.

by turns, as the humour seized him, generous and compassionate, or base, selfish, and relentless ; could devote his life and fortune to the service of a friend, or insult over the remains of a murdered enemy : and that enemy Cicero ! On the whole, he appears to have been without one touch of true magnanimity, though sometimes irregularly great from accident or impulse ; a magnificent, reckless libertine ; a valiant but a coarse soldier. Cleopatra, laying aside her literary pursuits, her refined elegance, and the many-coloured robe and majestic deportment of the goddess Isis, lent herself to all his rough tastes ; drank, and revelled, and jested with him ; hunted half the day, banqueted half the night, and surpassed him in prodigality and magnificence. Antony put off for her sake his Parthian expedition, and she led him in triumph to Alexandria.

Many anecdotes are told of the riotous and extravagant life which they led for several months in the capital of Egypt, vieing with each other in dissipation and revelry ; while treasures wrung from the blood and tears of thousands of human beings were lavished at a single feast. The famous story of Cleopatra's pearl is so often alluded to in history and poetry, besides being a favourite subject of painters and sculptors, that it ought to be mentioned here. It is said that Antony having once boasted of the splendour of an entertainment he had given to the queen, she laid him a wager that she would serve up to him a banquet of such exceeding magnificence, that one single course should be of more cost than all his feasts put together. Lucius Plancus was chosen as umpire. Cleopatra was accustomed to wear in her ears two pearls, unequalled in the world for their size, beauty, and value, the least of which was valued at 50,000*l.* of English money. When she was seated at the table with Antony, she took one of these pearls from her ear, and dissolving it in a cup of vinegar, pledged Antony and drank it off. She was about to treat the remaining pearl in the same manner, when Antony in amazement stopped her hand, and Lucius Plancus declared that she had already won the wager. Such is the story handed down to us from antiquity. That a woman like Cleopatra should sacrifice 50,000*l.*, or a million, for a whim is not absolutely incredible ; but an acid of sufficient strength to melt a pearl instantaneously could not be swallowed with

impunity. Cleopatra, if she *did* dissolve her pearl, must have diluted her cup with two or three bowls of wine. The other pearl, which had been the companion of that which Cleopatra had sacrificed with a kind of sublime ostentation, was afterwards carried to Rome, where it was divided into two, each almost inestimable, and hung in the ears of a celebrated statue of Venus, which Agrippa had just placed in his Pantheon.

The life which Mark Antony led with Cleopatra displeased Octavius and the Roman people. They called upon him to return, and at length the Triumvir, rousing himself as from a lethargy, set out for Italy: there a reconciliation was effected between the rival generals, and one of the conditions was the marriage of Antony with Octavia, the half-sister of Octavius, and a woman of equal beauty and virtue. Cleopatra heard of this union with grief and despair; she feared that it would put an end to her power over Antony, a power which rendered her in fact mistress of half the Roman empire; and it is certain that the idea of reigning at Rome, and dictating laws from the Capitol, had taken strong possession of her ambitious mind and vivid imagination. She had a powerful rival in Octavia, whose character is one of the most beautiful recorded in history, uniting all the dignity of a Roman matron in the best days of the republic with all the gentleness and graces of her sex. Though the marriage had been one of policy, she became strongly attached to her husband, and Antony, who was generous as well as facile, could not refuse her his esteem and his love. Octavia became the mediating angel between her fiery husband and her subtle brother, and for four years Antony remained faithful to this admirable woman, and appeared to have forgotten his Egyptian syren. He was, however, the slave of circumstance and impulse, and in passing through Asia Minor, to resume the Parthian war, his old love for Cleopatra seemed to revive as he approached the scenes of their former intercourse, and he had the weakness to send Fonteius Capito to invite her to come to him.

One might have imagined that the dignity of an offended woman, if not the pride of a great queen, would have prevented Cleopatra from obeying this invitation, or rather this command; but neither the one nor the other was ever known to stand in

the way of her passions or her policy. She did not hesitate to attend him; and this time she travelled with rather more expedition than on a former occasion. On her arrival Antony presented her with gifts; not rings, nor jewels, nor slaves, nor chariots, nor rich robes, but whole kingdoms and provinces, and millions of subjects. He gave her Phœnicia, Cœlo-Syria, the island of Cyprus, Cilicia, part of Judæa, and part of Arabia. As all the Asiatic provinces, from the Ionian Sea eastward, had been given up to Antony as his share of the empire, he might perhaps suppose that in bestowing these dominions on Cleopatra he was only presenting her with what, in the insolence of power, he deemed his own; and it may be added, that several of these provinces formed part of the ancient empire of the Ptolemies.

The Parthian war (B.C. 36) ended disgracefully; Antony, after many disasters, was forced to retreat, and had nearly suffered the fate of Crassus. He brought the miserable remains of his army back to Syria, and Cleopatra met him on the coast of Judæa, carrying with her money and clothing for his exhausted troops. Octavia also set out from Rome to meet Antony, taking with her reinforcements in men and money to assist him; but when she had reached Athens, Antony, acting under the spell of the sorceress who had subdued his better nature, commanded her to return to Italy. Cleopatra dreaded the power of Octavia; she felt, or she affected, the deepest affliction at the idea of his leaving her; and her "flickering enticements," to borrow the expression of the old translator of Plutarch, are well described, and give us a complete idea of the woman. She pretended to be the victim of a concealed grief; wasted her frame by voluntary abstinence, and "caused herself to be surprised" in tears, which she wiped away in haste, as if unwilling that they should be seen. Meanwhile those who were devoted to her interest were incessantly representing her sufferings to Antony, and appealing to his pity in behalf of a woman who loved him more than life or fame—who had sacrificed the one, and was ready to sacrifice the other, for his sake. Such artifices subdued Antony, as they have wrought on better and wiser men; and in the height of his infatuation he sent peremptory orders to Octavia to quit his

house at Rome. The lavish gifts bestowed on Cleopatra without the sanction of the Roman state; the dereliction of all his duties as a general and citizen; and now the indignities heaped on his excellent wife, the noblest lady in character and station in the empire, exasperated the Romans, and lent the fairest excuse to Octavius Cæsar for the breach he had long meditated. Octavia, the ever generous, ever admirable Octavia, entreated her brother not to make her wrongs the excuse for a war which would plunge the whole empire into confusion; and when her prayers availed not, she shut herself up in her house, devoted herself to her children, and refused to take any share in the deplorable contest she had no power to avert. It soon became apparent that a civil war between Octavius and Antony was inevitable. They assembled their forces by sea and land, and Cleopatra brought to the assistance of Antony two hundred galleys, twenty thousand talents, and provisions for his whole army. While these warlike preparations were going forward, they spent some time in the island of Samos, revelling in every species of luxury, and afterwards sailed for Athens, where the people decreed to Cleopatra public honours.

Antony and his friends had requested of the queen that she would return to Egypt, and there wait the event of the war; but this she positively refused: representing that as she was one of Antony's principal allies, it was unreasonable to deny her the privilege of being present, and commanding her own vessels and troops. It is probable that she dreaded a reconciliation between the rivals, and would rather have hazarded all on the issue of a battle, than have run the risk of losing her power over Antony. It was in compliance with her wishes that he resolved to engage Octavius by sea, contrary to the advice of his most experienced generals. "Her motive," says Plutarch, "was not the superior chance of victory, but, in case of being vanquished, the better opportunity to escape." That such an idea should have suggested itself to the mind of a woman constitutionally timid even beyond the timidity of her sex is not surprising, but that a veteran soldier like Antony should have yielded his opinion and conviction to her upon such an occasion is indeed wonderful. It was a saying among

the ancients that "those whom the gods wished to destroy, they first deprived of understanding:" and the infatuated folly of Antony devoted himself and thousands of brave men to destruction.

The sea-fight of Actium took place, therefore, under the most unfavourable auspices. Cleopatra insisted on being present at the engagement, but in the very outset of the battle, while all remained as yet undecided, she was seized with a sudden panic, and her sixty galleys were beheld, with all their sails spread, flying from the combat. This dereliction, which was the effect of fear rather than treachery, might have involved only Cleopatra and her friends in assured destruction, but for the madness of Antony, who, leaving his brave friends, his army, and his navy to their fate, sprang into a five-oared galley, and followed the Queen of Egypt in her ignominious flight. She saw him approaching, put up a signal in her vessel, and took him on board; but both were so overcome with shame and despair, that they could not look upon each other. Antony sat down and covered his face with his hands, and Cleopatra, retiring to the opposite extremity of the vessel, wept, while she gazed upon him, and had not courage to address him. At the end of three days their attendants succeeded in reconciling them, and they sailed for Libya.

Antony remained himself for some time in Libya, abandoned to despair, but he sent forward Cleopatra, under a safe convoy, to Alexandria.

It has already been observed that Cleopatra had no martial spirit, no disposition to meet violence with violence; on the contrary, she was, as a woman, "born to fears:" but the physical cowardice which caused her terrors and her flight at Actium was accompanied by great mental activity and energy. On her arrival in her own capital, she reflected on the situation to which she was reduced, and she saw that only two alternatives remained; either a war which she was incapable of conducting, or the loss of freedom and empire, to which she was determined not to submit. She formed an extraordinary and a bold resolution, tinged indeed with the egotism which belonged to her character, but such as would never have occurred to a common mind. She resolved to

transport her galleys, with all her choicest treasures, across the narrowest part of the Isthmus of Suez to the Red Sea, to embark there with her most faithful followers, and, like another Dido, sail in quest of some distant and hospitable clime, where she might found a new empire, and dwell in freedom and in peace. This singular enterprise she would probably have carried into execution, but it happened that the first vessels, which with infinite difficulty had been drawn across the isthmus, were burned by the Arabs; and at the same time that she received this information, Antony arrived in Egypt, and she abandoned all thoughts of her expedition. They recommenced their former mode of life, and while destruction was gradually closing upon them on every side like a net, they spent their time in feasting, and in the most magnificent and luxurious amusements. They instituted a society of twelve or fourteen intimate friends, the companions of their revels, and called themselves the "Inimitable Band," a title which, as fortune darkened around them, they exchanged for another, signifying the "*United in Death.*"

Meantime Octavius was approaching with his army, and their adherents were daily deserting or betraying them: in this emergency Cleopatra sent an ambassador to Octavius, requesting his protection for her children, and that Egypt, as their inheritance, might be preserved to them. She did not ask anything for herself, for it appears that even at this time she had resolved not to survive her power and her freedom. Antony, so low had he fallen, asked his life, and permission to retire to Athens. Octavius refused to listen to the petition of Antony; but he sent his freedman Thyrsus to Cleopatra, promising her every possible favour, if she would either put Antony to death or banish him from her dominions. We are not told whether Cleopatra spurned this messenger from her presence, nor what answer she returned to Octavius: it is merely said that Thyrsus behaved with an insolence which provoked Antony, and by his order the man was scourged, and dismissed with disgrace and contempt.

There is not, however, the slightest reason to suspect that Cleopatra listened to the base suggestions of Octavius, or entertained for a moment the idea of betraying Antony; on the

contrary, she treated him in his misfortunes with increased tenderness and respect. It is related, that at this time she kept her own birthday as a day of mourning, "with double pomp of sadness," while the birthday of Antony, which occurred soon after, was celebrated with such magnificence, "that many of the guests who came poor returned wealthy."

The winter passed away in this manner: in the spring Octavius again took the field and marched upon Alexandria, subduing all the cities and towns which lay in his route.

Cleopatra had erected near the Temple of Isis a magnificent building, which in history is called her *monument*, and which was probably designed as a sepulchre for her family, but, like many of the ancient tombs, it was constructed on the scale and with the solidity of a fortress. Thither she conveyed all her treasures, her gold and silver, her jewels, her pearls, her ebony, her ivory, and cinnamon. It is curious to find cinnamon enumerated among the most valuable of her possessions, but in ancient times, when the countries which produced it were yet unknown, this spice was considered almost equivalent to gold: with these she mingled a quantity of flax, and a number of torches. Octavius, under the greatest apprehension lest in a fit of despair or wilfulness she should destroy these vast treasures, which he intended to appropriate to himself, sent to her message after message, assuring her of the gentlest treatment, all which the queen received and answered with a complacency more affected than real: her subsequent behaviour showed that she had never trusted Octavius, and his conduct and character equally proved that she had no reason to do so.

Meantime the adverse army appeared before the walls of Alexandria, and Antony, like a lion in the toils, seemed resolved to sell his life as dearly as he could; he made a desperate sally, in which he had the advantage, and drove back the enemy to their entrenchments. Cleopatra met him on his return to the palace; she threw herself into his arms, covered as he was with dust and blood; and when he presented to her a certain soldier who had fought with distinguished bravery by his side, the queen called for a helmet and target of pure gold from the royal treasures, and bestowed them on the warrior, adding "words of such sweet breath composed as made the gifts more rich."

Loaded with these treasures, the soldier deserted the same night, and went over to the enemy : an instance of ingratitude which some of the friends of Antony regarded with superstitious horror, as ominous of his approaching fall. Another engagement took place a few days afterwards with a far different result. All that remained of Antony's fleet and army surrendered to Octavius almost before a blow was struck ; and Antony returned to the city, exclaiming in a fury that he had been betrayed by Cleopatra, and execrating her as the cause of his misfortunes.

The unhappy queen, terrified by this explosion of passion, fled to her monument, accompanied by her two favourite women, Charmian and Iras, and having secured it strongly within, sent a slave to tell Antony that she was dead ; but immediately afterwards, repenting of this message, and fearful of the effect it might produce on him, she despatched her secretary Diomed to inform him that she still lived, and desired to see him once more. This assurance arrived too late. Diomed found the worst anticipations of his royal mistress fatally fulfilled : Antony lay stretched on the ground, weltering in his blood. He had given himself a mortal wound, but he was not yet dead ; and in a faint voice he desired to be carried to Cleopatra. With her characteristic timidity and selfishness, she could refuse, even at such a moment, to open the gates, from the apprehension of treason, and he was drawn up by cords into the monument ; the queen herself assisted her women, distorting every feature by the violence of her efforts ; while Antony, already in the agonies of death, extended his arms towards her from below. When they had succeeded in lifting him into the interior of the monument, he was laid on a couch, and Cleopatra, hanging over him, beat her bosom, rent her garments, called on him by a thousand tender names, and gave way to all the violence of feminine grief. Antony endeavoured to soothe her, and while she wiped from his brow the blood, and the damps of approaching death, he called for wine, and drank to her. Soon afterwards he expired in her arms, congratulating himself that, "being a Roman, he had been by a Roman overcome."

Antony was scarcely dead, when Proculeius arrived from

Octavius, with orders to take Cleopatra alive, but she refused to yield, or to admit the messenger into her presence, and would only confer with him from the window. Proculeius assured her of the favour of Octavius, and she replied by again demanding Egypt for her children; she asked nothing for herself but permission to bury Antony.

Octavius, struck by this unexpected reserve, now began to suspect her design; and as her death would have disconcerted all his hopes of exhibiting her in triumph at Rome, to take her alive became an object of almost feverish anxiety. He succeeded by the following stratagem: he sent Gallus to confer with her at the gate of the monument; meanwhile Proculeius placed a ladder at the window, and while the queen was in deep conversation with Gallus, he entered from behind. Thus taken by surprise, she turned, and instantly drew her dagger, with intent to plunge it in her bosom, but Proculeius snatched it from her, and, while she struggled in his arms, endeavoured to soothe her by the most persuasive arguments. He carefully examined her dress, lest she should have poison or weapons concealed about her, and then hurried with the news of his success to Octavius, who received it with exultation.

The means of self-destruction being carefully withheld, and guards posted day and night round the monument, Cleopatra apparently resigned herself to a fate which it was in vain to resist. Having obtained by her prayers the body of Antony, she performed the funeral rites herself with as much pomp and magnificence as she could have displayed in the days of her power. Soon after she was seized with a violent indisposition, and not only refused to take the remedies prescribed, but with a sullen resolution obstinately rejected food. Octavius became alarmed, and he had recourse to a cruel expedient to force her to attend to her health: all the children of Cleopatra were in his power, and he threatened to treat them with the utmost severity unless she submitted to the treatment of her physicians. Maternal tenderness was one of the few virtues of this woman, and the unfeeling menace of Octavius had its full effect; she consented to take medicine and food, and recovered.

Octavius soon after paid her a visit in the monument, and

she received her conqueror with all that politeness, that artificial grace, for which she was so remarkable. Her appearance was deplorable, for her eyes were swelled with incessant weeping, and her bosom disfigured by the blows which she had inflicted on herself, according to the Egyptian custom, when she had performed the obsequies of Antony. Still she preserved her presence of mind, and her object was evidently to blind and disarm Octavius by her apparent submission rather than impose on him by assuming any airs of dignity. She wept feigned tears, and threw herself on the protection of Octavius, as though she had *not* resolved to die. She gave up an inventory of her treasures; and when her treasurer Seleucus accused her of keeping back some articles of value, she gave a stronger proof of the natural violence and wilfulness of her temper; she started up with sudden passion, caught him by the hair, and struck him several blows in the face. She assured Octavius that the jewels she had withheld were not for herself, but intended as presents to Octavia and Livia (the sister and wife of Octavius), by whose good offices she hoped to win his favour. Octavius in return spared neither protestations nor compliments, and after a conference of some length the conqueror departed with the persuasion that her spirit was broken, and that she was completely subdued to his wishes;—but he was totally mistaken. Cleopatra, with as much subtlety, had far more penetration than the Roman; she had seen through his mean designs and his deep disguises, and while he was exulting in the hope of having deceived her, she triumphed in the certainty of having cheated him. Her resolve was fixed,—to die, rather than be led in triumph through the streets of Rome, a spectacle for the ferocious multitude; but timid by nature, she dreaded what she most wished, and feared the means of death more than death itself. For several months, and even long before the death of Antony, she had occupied herself in experiments on the nature and operation of different poisons, and she found that the bite of the asp, a small venomous serpent, was the least painful and the most rapid in its effects. She had prevailed on a young Roman named Dollabella to give her timely notice of the intentions of Octavius with respect to her future destination; and he sent

her word privately that in three days she would be despatched into Italy, with her children, to grace the triumph of the conqueror.

On receiving this intelligence, Cleopatra sent a message to Octavius requesting that she might be permitted to visit the tomb of Antony, and offer such oblations to the dead as were the custom of her nation. This being granted her, she was carried (still surrounded by a numerous guard) to the monument of her lover, and there, falling prostrate before it, and shedding floods of tears, she burst into the following lamentation :—"It is not long, my Antony, since with these hands I buried thee. Alas ! they were then free ; but thy Cleopatra is now a prisoner, attended by a guard, lest, in the transports of her grief, she should disfigure this captive body, which is reserved to adorn the triumph over thee. These are the last offerings, the last honours she can pay thee ; for she is now to be conveyed to a distant shore. Nothing could part us while we lived, but in death we are to be divided. Thou, though a Roman, liest buried in Egypt ; and I, an Egyptian, must be interred in Italy,—the only favour I shall receive from thy country. Yet, if the gods of Rome have power or mercy left (for surely those of Egypt have forsaken us), let them not suffer me to be led in living triumph to thy disgrace ! No !—hide me, hide me with thee in the grave ; for life, since thou hast left it, has been misery to me." Having uttered these words, she again embraced the tomb, and, assisted by her women, she hung it with wreaths of flowers, and poured over it the funeral libations. These ceremonies duly performed she returned with an air of composure to her monument, ordered her women, Charmian and Iras, to prepare a bath, to array her in her royal robes, and place the diadem of Egypt on her head. She then sat down and wrote a letter to Octavius, and having despatched this epistle by a confidential servant, she commanded a sumptuous banquet to be prepared, of which she partook cheerfully. Meantime her letter had been delivered to Octavius ; and when he opened it, the plaintive and despairing style in which it was expressed at once betrayed her fatal intentions. He immediately despatched Proculeius and others with orders to save her if

possible; but though they made the utmost speed, they arrived too late. On breaking open the doors of the monument, a spectacle at once terrible and affecting presented itself: Cleopatra, magnificently arrayed, lay dead on her couch; Iras, one of her women, was extended at her feet; the other, still alive, was arranging the diadem on the head of her mistress. Proculeius exclaimed, "Was this well done, Charmian?" To which she replied, "Yes, Roman! it was well done; for such a death became so great a queen;" and on uttering these words she fell and expired on the body of her mistress.

Thus perished this celebrated woman, whose character exhibits such an extraordinary mixture of grandeur and littleness, and whose life and fate present something so wildly magnificent to the fancy, that we dare not try her by the usual rules of conduct, nor use her name to point a commonplace moral, but must needs leave her as we find her, a dazzling piece of witchcraft, with which sober reasoning has nothing to do. She died in her 39th year, having reigned twenty-two years from the death of her brother Ptolemy. She was twenty-three years younger than Antony, to whom her attachment had lasted fourteen years; and though policy and ambition might have mingled with her love for him, there is no reason to suppose her guilty of treachery or infidelity to him during this period.

Although Octavius was beyond measure incensed and disappointed by her death, he could not refuse to pay her funeral honours; but, with characteristic meanness, he commanded all the statues which existed of her to be demolished—a usual method among the Romans of expressing hatred and vengeance. A man named Archidius, whom Cleopatra had treated with kindness, offered a thousand talents to redeem them from destruction; and Octavius, in whom the spirit of avarice was even stronger than the spirit of vengeance, suffered them at this price to stand.

The children of Cleopatra were carried to Rome. Cæsarion, her son by Cæsar, was afterwards put to death by Octavius. Her three children by Antony were Alexander, Cleopatra, and Ptolemy: they were still in their childhood when they

adorned the triumph of Octavius, and walked in procession as captives, while the statue of their mother, exhibiting her as she appeared in death, with a golden asp upon her arm, was paraded before them. The generous Octavia afterwards took them under her care, and brought them up in her own house, making no distinction between them and her own children. She afterwards married Cleopatra to Juba, King of Mauritania, and the two brothers settled with their sister in that country. The younger Cleopatra inherited much of her mother's grace and accomplishments. Some medals remain with the head of Juba on one side, with a Latin inscription, and the head of Cleopatra on the reverse, bearing a Greek inscription; from which we may infer that, though transplanted into a foreign land, she still remembered her native country, and loved and cultivated her native language and literature.



Z E N O B I A,

QUEEN OF PALMYRA.



OF the government and manners of the Arabians before the time of Mahomet we have few and imperfect accounts, but from the remotest ages they led the same unsettled and predatory life which they do at this day, dispersed in hordes, and dwelling under tents. It was not to those wild and wandering tribes that the superb Palmyra owed its rise and grandeur, though situated in the midst of their deserts, where it is now beheld in its melancholy beauty and ruined splendour, like an enchanted island in the midst of an ocean of sands. The merchants who trafficked between India and Europe, by the only route then known, first colonized this singular spot, which afforded them a convenient resting-place, and even in the days of Solomon it was the emporium for the gems and gold, the ivory, gums, spices, and silks of the far Eastern countries, which thus found their way to the remotest parts of Europe. The Palmyrenes were, therefore, a mixed race : their origin, and many of their customs, were Egyptian ; their love of luxury, and their manners, were derived from Persia ; their language, literature, and architecture were Greek.

Thus, like Venice and Genoa, in more modern times, Palmyra owed its splendour to the opulence and public spirit of its merchants ; but its chief fame and historical interest it owes to the genius and heroism of a woman.

Septimia Zenobia, for such is her classical appellation, was the daughter of an Arab chief, Amrou, the son of Dharb, the

son of Hassan. Of her first husband we have no account : she was left a widow at a very early age, and married, secondly, Odenathus, chief of several tribes of the desert, near Palmyra, and a prince of extraordinary valour and boundless ambition. Odenathus was the ally of the Romans in their wars against Sapor (or, more properly, Shah Poor), King of Persia : he gained several splendid victories over that powerful monarch, and twice pursued his armies even to the gates of Ctesiphon (or Ispahan), his capital. Odenathus was as fond of the chase as of war, and in all his military and hunting expeditions he was accompanied by his wife Zenobia, a circumstance which the Roman historians record with astonishment and admiration, as contrary to their manners, but which was the general custom of the Arab women of that time. Zenobia not only excelled her countrywomen in the qualities for which they all were remarkable, in courage, prudence, and fortitude, in patience of fatigue, and activity of mind and body ;—she also possessed a more enlarged understanding ; her views were more enlightened, her habits more intellectual. The successes of Odenathus were partly attributed to her, and they were always considered as reigning jointly. She was also eminently beautiful, with the Oriental eyes and complexion, teeth like pearls, and a voice of uncommon power and sweetness.

Odenathus obtained from the Romans the title of Augustus and General of the East ; he revenged the fate of Valerian, who had been taken captive and put to death by Shah Poor : the Persian king, with a luxurious barbarity truly Oriental, is said to have used the unfortunate emperor as his footstool to mount his horse. But in the midst of his victories and conquests Odenathus became the victim of a domestic conspiracy, at the head of which was his nephew Mæonius. He was assassinated at Emessa during a hunting expedition, and with him his son by his first marriage. Zenobia avenged the death of her husband on his murderers, and as her sons were yet in their infancy, she first exercised the supreme power in their name ; but afterwards, apparently with the consent of the people, assumed the diadem with the title of Augusta and Queen of the East.

The Romans and their effeminate Emperor Gallienus refused to acknowledge Zenobia's claim to the sovereignty of her husband's dominions, and Heraclianus was sent with a large army to reduce her to obedience ; but Zenobia took the field against him, engaged, and totally defeated him in a pitched battle. Not satisfied with this triumph over the haughty masters of the world, she sent her general Zabdas to attack them in Egypt, which she subdued and added to her territories, together with a part of Armenia and Asia Minor. Thus her dominion extended from the Euphrates to the Mediterranean, and over all those vast and fertile countries formerly governed by Ptolemy and Seleucus. Jerusalem, Antioch, Damascus, and other cities famed in history, were included in her empire, but she fixed her residence at Palmyra ; and in an interval of peace she turned her attention to the further adornment of her magnificent capital. It is related by historians that many of those stupendous fabrics of which the mighty ruins are still existing were either erected, or at least restored and embellished, by this extraordinary woman. But that which we have most difficulty in reconciling with the manners of her age and country was Zenobia's passion for study, and her taste for the Greek and Latin literature. She is said to have drawn up an epitome of history for her own use ; the Greek historians, poets, and philosophers were familiar to her ; she invited Longinus, one of the most elegant writers of antiquity, to her splendid court, and appointed him her secretary and minister. For her he composed his famous "Treatise on the Sublime," a work which is not only admirable for its intrinsic excellence, but most valuable as having preserved to our times many beautiful fragments of ancient poets whose works are now lost, particularly those of Sappho.

The classical studies of Zenobia seem to have inspired her with some contempt for her Arab ancestry. She was fond of deriving her origin from the Macedonian kings of Egypt, and of reckoning Cleopatra among her progenitors. In imitation of the famous Egyptian queen, she affected great splendour in her style of living and in her attire ; and drank her wine out of cups of gold richly carved and adorned with gems. It is, however,

admitted that in female dignity and discretion, as well as in beauty, she far surpassed Cleopatra. She administered the government of her empire with such admirable prudence and policy, and in particular with such strict justice towards all classes of her subjects, that she was beloved by her own people, and respected and feared by the neighbouring nations. She paid great attention to the education of her three sons, habited them in the Roman purple, and brought them up in the Roman fashion. But this predilection for the Greek and Roman manners appears to have displeased and alienated the Arab tribes, for it is remarked that after this time their fleet cavalry, inured to the deserts, and unequalled as horsemen, no longer formed the strength of her army.

While Gallienus and Claudius governed the Roman empire, Zenobia was allowed to pursue her conquests, rule her dominions, and enjoy her triumphs almost without opposition ; but at length the fierce and active Aurelian was raised to the purple, and he was indignant that a woman should thus brave with impunity the offended majesty of Rome. Having subdued all his competitors in the West, he turned his arms against the Queen of the East. Zenobia, undismayed by the terrors of the Roman name, levied troops, placed herself at their head, and gave the second command to Zabdas, a brave and hitherto successful general. The first great battle took place near Antioch ; Zenobia was totally defeated after an obstinate conflict ; but not disheartened by this reverse, she retired upon Emessa, rallied her armies, and once more defied the Roman emperor. Being again defeated with great loss, and her army nearly dispersed, the high-spirited queen withdrew to Palmyra, collected her friends around her, strengthened the fortifications, and declared her resolution to defend her capital and her freedom to the last moment of her existence.

Zenobia was conscious of the great difficulties which would attend the siege of a great city, well stored with provisions, and naturally defended by surrounding deserts ; these deserts were infested by clouds of Arabs, who, appearing and disappearing with the swiftness and suddenness of a whirlwind, continually harassed her enemies. Thus defended without, and supported by a strong garrison within, Zenobia braved her antagonist from

the towers of Palmyra as boldly as she had defied him in the field of battle. The expectation of succours from the East added to her courage, and determined her to persevere to the last. "Those," said Aurelian in one of his letters, "who speak with contempt of the war I am waging against a woman, are ignorant both of the character and power of Zenobia. It is impossible to enumerate her warlike preparations of stones, of arrows, and of every species of missile weapons and military engines."

Aurelian, in fact, became doubtful of the event of the siege, and he offered the queen the most honourable terms of capitulation if she would surrender to his arms; but Zenobia, who was aware that famine raged in the Roman camp, and daily looked for the expected relief, rejected his proposals in a famous Greek epistle, written with equal arrogance and eloquence: she defied the utmost of his power; and, alluding to the fate of Cleopatra, expressed her resolution to die like her, rather than yield to the Roman arms. Aurelian was incensed by this haughty letter, even more than by the dangers and delays attending the siege: he redoubled his efforts, he cut off the succours she expected, he found means to subsist his troops even in the midst of the desert: every day added to the number and strength of his army; every day increased the difficulties of Zenobia, and the despair of the Palmyrenes. The city would not hold out much longer, and the queen resolved to fly, not to insure her own safety, but to bring relief to her capital:—such at least is the excuse made for a part of her conduct which certainly requires apology. Mounted on a fleet dromedary, she contrived to elude the vigilance of the besiegers, and took the road to the Euphrates; but she was pursued by a party of the Roman light cavalry, overtaken, and brought as a captive into the presence of Aurelian. He sternly demanded how she had dared to oppose the power of Rome; to which she replied with a mixture of firmness and gentleness. "Because I disdained to acknowledge as my masters such men as Aureolus and Gallienus. To Aurelian I submit as my conqueror and my sovereign." Aurelian was not displeased at the artful compliment implied in this answer, but he had not forgotten the insulting arrogance of her former reply. While this conference

was going forward in the tent of the Roman emperor, the troops, who were enraged by her long and obstinate resistance and all they had suffered during the siege, assembled in tumultuous bands, calling out for vengeance, and with loud and fierce cries demanding her instant death. The unhappy queen, surrounded by the ferocious and insolent soldiery, forgot all her former vaunts and intrepidity: her feminine terrors had perhaps been excusable if they had not rendered her base; but in her first panic she threw herself on the mercy of the emperor, accused her ministers as the cause of her determined resistance, and confessed that Longinus had written in her name that eloquent letter of defiance which had so incensed the emperor.

Longinus, with the rest of her immediate friends and counsellors, was instantly sacrificed to the fury of the soldiers; and the philosopher met death with all the fortitude which became a wise and great man, employing his last moments in endeavouring to console Zenobia and reconcile her to her fate.

Palmyra surrendered to the conqueror, who seized upon the treasures of the city, but spared the buildings and the lives of the inhabitants. Leaving in the place a garrison of Romans, he returned to Europe, carrying with him Zenobia and her family, who were destined to grace his triumph.

But scarcely had Aurelian reached the Hellespont, when tidings were brought to him that the inhabitants of Palmyra had again revolted, and had put the Roman governor and garrison to the sword. Without a moment's deliberation, the emperor turned back, reached Palmyra by rapid marches, and took a terrible vengeance on that miserable and devoted city: he commanded the indiscriminate massacre of all the inhabitants, men, women, and children; fired its magnificent edifices, and levelled its walls to the ground. He afterwards repented of his fury, and devoted a part of the captured treasures to reinstate some of the glories he had destroyed, but it was too late; he could not reanimate the dead, nor raise from its ruins the stupendous Temple of the Sun. Palmyra became desolate; its very existence was forgotten, until about a century ago, when some English travellers discovered it by accident. Thus the blind fury of one man extinguished life, happiness, industry, art, and intelligence through a vast extent of country,

and severed a link which had long connected the eastern and western continents of the old world.

When Aurelian returned to Rome after the termination of the war, he celebrated his triumph with extraordinary pomp. A vast number of elephants, and tigers, and strange beasts from the conquered countries; sixteen hundred gladiators, an innumerable train of captives, and a gorgeous display of treasures,—gold, silver, gems, plate, glittering raiment, and Oriental luxuries and rarities, the rich plunder of Palmyra,—were exhibited to the populace. But every eye was fixed on the beautiful and majestic figure of the Syrian queen, who walked in the procession before her own sumptuous chariot, attired in her diadem and royal robes, blazing with jewels, her eyes fixed on the ground, and her delicate form drooping under the weight of her golden fetters, which were so heavy that two slaves were obliged to assist in supporting them on either side; while the Roman populace, at that time the most brutal and degraded in the whole world, gaped and stared upon her misery, and shouted in exultation over her fall. Perhaps Zenobia may in that moment have thought upon Cleopatra, whose example she had once proposed to follow; and, according to the Pagan ideas of greatness and fortitude, envied her destiny, and felt her own ignominy with all the bitterness of a vain repentance.

The captivity of Zenobia took place in the year 273, and in the fifth year of her reign. There are two accounts of her subsequent fate, differing widely from each other. One author asserts that she starved herself to death, refusing to survive her own disgrace and the ruin of her country; but others inform us that the Emperor Aurelian bestowed on her a superb villa at Tivoli, where she resided in great honour; and that she was afterwards united to a Roman senator, with whom she lived many years, and died at a good old age. Her daughters married into Roman families, and it is said that some of her descendants remained so late as the fifth century.

The three sons of Zenobia are called, in the Latin histories, Timolaus, Herennicanus, and Vaballathus. The youngest became king of part of Armenia; but of the two eldest we have no account.



{ JOANNA I. }

{ QUEEN OF NAPLES. }



ROBERT of Taranto, who ascended the throne of Naples in 1309, was one of the most admirable and enlightened monarchs of his age, and the third of the Angevine princes who had reigned over Naples, from the time that Charles of Anjou usurped that crown in 1265. The name and the memory of King Robert have descended to us, linked with the most delightful associations ; he is distinguished in Italian history by the epithets of the WISE and the GOOD ; and if some of his political arrangements may render his claims to the former epithet a little doubtful, yet in one respect it was justly merited. He lived at the period when literature and civilization were beginning to dawn in Italy ; if that can be called a *dawn* which was illuminated by such men as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, with all of whom he was contemporary. It must, however, be allowed that the light they shed was at the time only partial, and that the munificent and general protection which Robert extended to letters and learned men contributed greatly to cherish and diffuse that light. His own acquirements were extraordinary for the times in which he lived, particularly in the sciences, for, until his acquaintance with Petrarch, he seems to have despised poetry. However, he became so sincere a convert to the charms of verse, that in his old age he commenced poet himself, and several of his compositions in the Tuscan dialect are yet extant.* It was wisdom in Robert to perceive in what his

* They were printed at Rome, in 1642.

most just and durable fame would hereafter consist. It was wisdom too in those dark and turbulent times to feel and acknowledge the blessings of peace, and to avert by every possible means war and its attendant horrors from his hereditary dominions. The name of "*Il buon Rè Roberto*," the friend of Petrarch and the first patron of Boccaccio, has a far dearer interest in our memory than that of any of the iron-girt, fighting monarchs of his age, if we except his illustrious namesake and contemporary Robert Bruce, whose celebrity, though so different in character, is not brighter or purer than that of Robert of Naples.

Robert had one son, *Charles, Duke of Calabria*, remarkable for his accomplishments, his filial piety, and his love of justice, who unhappily died before his father. This prince had espoused Marie de Valois, sister to that Philippe de Valois who disputed the crown of France with our Edward the Third; and by her, who survived him only three years, he left two infant daughters, *Joanna* and *Maria*. Joanna, the eldest of these princesses, became afterwards one of the most celebrated, most accomplished, and most unfortunate of women and of queens. Her elegant biographer has truly observed,* that in person, in character, in conduct, in her destiny and tragical end, Joanna can only be compared to Mary, Queen of Scots. The parallel, as we shall see, is indeed singularly close, and perhaps one of the most remarkable and interesting which is presented in history.

Queen Joanna was born at Naples, about the end of February 1328, and was not quite a year old when she lost her father, the Duke of Calabria. King Robert, whose grief for the death of his excellent son is represented as overwhelming, undertook the care and education of his infant grand-daughters, to whom he transferred all the affection he had felt for their father; and in 1331, when Joanna was about four years old, he declared her the heiress of his crown, and caused his nobles to take the oaths of allegiance to her, as Duchess of Calabria, and inheriting with the title all the rights of her father in Naples and in Provence.

* See the *Historical Life of Joanna of Sicily*, preface.

To understand the situation of the royal family of Naples at this period, it is necessary to refer to the preceding reign. Charles the Second, the father of King Robert, had married Maria, heiress of Hungary, and having succeeded to that kingdom in right of his wife, on his death-bed he divided his dominions, bequeathing the throne of Hungary to his eldest son, Charles Martel; while Naples and Provence were left to his younger son Robert. The princes of the elder branch, thus excluded from the fairest part of the succession, never acquiesced in this division, although it had been confirmed by a solemn decree of the Pope, but were continually advancing claims on the kingdom of Naples: hence the singular connexion between the histories of Hungary and Naples during the whole of the fourteenth century; hence were two countries so remote and dissimilar brought in continual collision; hence sprang a series of domestic divisions, crimes, usurpations, and murderous wars, which long desolated the loveliest provinces of Italy; and hence, in the first instance, arose those complicated misfortunes and extraordinary vicissitudes which chequered the life of Joanna of Sicily.

It was the singular fate of this queen during the whole of her eventful reign to suffer by the mistakes, the follies, or the crimes of her nearest connexions, and to be injured by her own virtues; for the weaknesses of a man are sometimes the virtues of a woman: or at least, if the indulgence in the gentle and kindly feelings proper to her sex, as pity, tenderness, and confidence, in despite of calculation and self-interest, may become weak or criminal in a woman when trusted with sovereign power,—it is the best argument that has yet been adduced in favour of the Salique law; but the consequence is not surely necessary and inevitable, though from some examples left us in history we might almost deem it so.

The first steps taken by the wise grandfather of Joanna, long before she could judge or act for herself, were the cause of many of her subsequent miseries and of the darkest imputations which rest on her memory.

In the first place, King Robert appointed as her governess, and the guardian of her person, a woman who has obtained a tragical celebrity in Italian history by the name of Philippa

the Catanese. She was the daughter of a fisherman of Catania in Sicily, and on a sudden emergency she was employed by Queen Violante, the first wife of Robert, to nurse her infant son the Duke of Calabria. Philippa was gifted beyond her birth or her years; beautiful, intelligent, and aspiring, she recommended herself so much to the queen by her zeal and affection, that she became her principal attendant, and afterwards filled the same office to the second wife of Robert, Queen Sancha, who was not less attached to her. Her foster-child, the Duke of Calabria, who tenderly loved her, married her to the seneschal of his palace, and appointed her lady of the bedchamber to his wife: thus it happened that she was present at the birth of Joanna, and was the first to receive her in her arms. The elevation of this plebeian woman to offices of trust and honour about the persons of four princesses successively, the extreme attachment they all manifested for her, and the favour and confidence of King Robert during a period of forty years, appeared so offensive and so incomprehensible in those times, that it was ascribed to magic. In her character, in her destiny, in her extraordinary exaltation from the meanest station to rank and power, and in her sudden and terrible fall, Philippa does in fact remind us of Leonora Galigai: but it was not certainly in this case the magic influence of a strong mind over a weak one: and though Orloff calls her "*femme intrigante et sans mœurs*,"* yet it must be allowed that the worst offences charged against her appear exceedingly problematical, and seem to have originated in the universal jealousy with which her elevation and that of her family were beheld by the proud nobility. The power which Philippa obtained over the affections of Queen Joanna was one of the heaviest accusations against her unhappy mistress, and led to her own ruin and horrible death; yet, considering all the circumstances, nothing surely could be more natural and inevitable. If the appointment of the Catanese to be her governess was impolitic and disreputable, on account of her low origin and the offence it gave to many of the high-born ladies of the court, yet the confidence

* *Mémoires sur Naples.*

of King Robert, and the dispositions and qualities afterwards displayed by Joanna, prove her to have been not wholly unworthy of the trust reposed in her.

The next great error committed by Robert in the management of his infant heiress was her marriage with his grand-nephew Andreas, the second son of Carobert, King of Hungary. By this marriage he fondly hoped to extinguish all the feuds and jealousies which had long existed between the two kingdoms, by restoring to the elder branch of his family, in the person of Andreas, the possession of the throne of Naples, without prejudice to the rights of his grand-daughter: neither does the arrangement appear at first view so impolitic as it eventually proved; it was founded in a principle of justice, and was rather hastily executed than imprudently devised.

Joanna was only five years old, and Andreas only seven, when this ill-fated union was celebrated at Naples with all possible splendour, and in the midst of feasts and rejoicings: the infant couple were thenceforward brought up together, with the idea that they were destined for each other; but as they grew in years they displayed the most opposite qualities of person and mind.

"For me," said King Robert to Petrarch, who has himself recorded this memorable speech—"for me, I swear that letters are dearer to me than my crown; and were I obliged to renounce the one or the other, I should quickly tear the diadem from my brow." Filled with this enthusiastic conviction of the advantages of learning, the king surrounded his grand-daughter with the best preceptors in science and literature which could be procured throughout all Italy. Those chronicles which differ most on the character and conduct of Joanna, are yet all agreed on one point; all bear testimony to her extraordinary talents and her love of literature: and the Neapolitan historians assert, that at twelve years old "she was not only distinguished by her superior endowments, but already surpassed in understanding, not only every child of her own age, but many women of mature years." To these mental accomplishments were added a gentle and generous temper, a graceful person, a beautiful and engaging countenance, and the most captivating manners.

Andreas, on the contrary, had been surrounded by his rude Hungarian attendants, and grew up weak, indolent, and unpolished, though without any of those evil dispositions and degrading and profligate propensities which have been imputed to him.* His father, the King of Hungary, had appointed as his preceptor a monk named Fra Roberto, or Friar Robert, the declared enemy of the Catanese, and her competitor in power. Of this monk historians have left us a far more frightful and disgusting portrait than of his rival Philippa. It was his constant aim to keep his pupil in ignorance, that he might keep him in subjection; to inspire him with a dislike and jealousy of the Neapolitans, whom he was destined to govern, and keep up his partiality for the Hungarians, to whose manners, dress, and customs he obliged him to adhere. The extreme indolence and pliability of the prince's temper aided the designs of this wretch, and enabled him to obtain an unbounded influence over the mind of his pupil. The good King Robert perceived too late the fatal mistake he had committed; he saw the miseries and perils he had prepared for his beautiful and accomplished heiress by this unequal marriage, and the compact being irrevocable, he endeavoured at least to obviate some of the threatened evils by excluding Andreas from any share in the sovereign power. In a general assembly of his nobles, he caused the oath of allegiance to be taken to Joanna alone, as queen in her own right. But this precaution, so far from having the desired effect, added to the dangers he apprehended; while it gratified the Neapolitans, it excited the jealousy and anger of the Hungarians, and laid the foundation of many troubles and factions in the state.

Meantime the young Joanna, who could not yet judge of the policy or impolicy of the measures taken for her safety and personal welfare, grew up to the age of fifteen, happy in the studies and pleasures befitting her years, happy in the unconsciousness of the storms impending over her, and every day improving in beauty and intellect. She showed at this time no dislike to her young husband, and no repugnance

* See Historical Life of Joanna of Sicily.

to the solemnization of their marriage contract: though Andreas, as he advanced in years, displayed the same slothful and imbecile temper for which he had been remarkable from infancy. They bore the title of Duke and Duchess of Calabria, and constantly resided together under the care of King Robert and Queen Sancha. The whole of the royal family inhabited the Castel Novo at Naples, which with the strength of a fortress united the magnificence of a palace. It contained at this time the finest library then existing in Europe, and its walls had been decorated by the paintings of Giotto, one of the first restorers of the art in Italy. Under the same roof resided the Princess Maria, the younger sister of Joanna, and Maria of Sicily, a natural daughter of King Robert, remarkable for her beauty, her accomplishments, and her gallantries: she was the mistress of Boccaccio, and his too celebrated Fiametta, at whose command he wrote the Decamerone.*

King Robert died in 1343, leaving Joanna, at the age of fifteen, sovereign over three of the most beautiful countries in Europe—Naples, Provence, and Piedmont. On the refusal of young Queen Sancha to accept the office of sole Regent, for which her capacity and virtues well fitted her, but which a mistaken idea of religious humility induced her to decline, he had appointed a council of Regency during the minority of the young queen, and had especially excluded Andreas and his Hungarian adherents from any participation in the government. But all his arrangements for the welfare of Joanna, and for

* Maria of Sicily became the wife of Robert, Comte d'Artois. An old French writer is of opinion that this princess loved Boccaccio merely "*pour son beau dire et sa belle plume, pour la rendre excellente et immortelle par son rapport à tout le monde de ses belles vertus; mais le galant n'en fit rien; et la laissa trompée, et s'en alla écrire ces deux livres menteurs, qui l'ont plus scandalisée qu'édifiée.*" Assuredly the kind of immortality which Boccaccio has bestowed on the Princess Maria is not exactly that which she anticipated: the Fiametta, notwithstanding the reality, force, and beauty of the picture which her lover has left of her, (considered as a portrait,) will never bear a comparison with her contemporary, Laura,

"Basso desir non è ch' ivi si senta,
Ma d'onor, di virtute——."

the safety and peace of the kingdom, were defeated by the intrigues and the wickedness of Fra Roberto, who interfered with the government in the name of his pupil Andreas. The young king and queen became little else than state prisoners in the hands of this monk and his Hungarian faction, who by their arrogance, rapacity, and tyranny, drove away and disgusted all the friends of Joanna: the weak were oppressed, the great insulted; and the sovereigns, the court, and the populace, all trembled alike in the presence of an ignorant, ragged, dirty friar. Petrarch, who about this time visited Naples as Envoy from the Pope, has left us, in one of his eloquent letters, a description of Fra Roberto, written in a strain of violent but apparently just invective. "May Heaven," he exclaims, "rid the soil of Italy of such a pest!—a horrible animal, with bald head and bare feet, short in stature, swoln in person, with worn-out rags, torn studiously to show his naked skin, not only despises the supplications of the citizens, but, from the vantage-ground of his feigned sanctity, treats with scorn the embassy of the Pope." Joanna wished to have attached Petrarch to her court, for she was able to appreciate his genius and his worth, and seems to have inspired him in return with the strongest admiration for her character and talents; on every occasion he speaks of her with esteem for her virtues, and pity for her helpless situation. But the court of Naples was at this time no enviable residence for a sentimental poet and a man of letters, in love with tranquillity and retirement: it was a continual scene of factious disturbances between the Neapolitans and the Hungarians, so that Petrarch compares the young queen and her consort to "two lambs in the midst of wolves." Joanna being sovereign in name only, and not in authority, conferred on Petrarch the only honours which it was in her power to bestow; she appointed him her chaplain and almoner, titles not merely nominal, since they were accompanied by some valuable privileges. Petrarch left Naples in 1343.

About a year after the accession of Joanna, the Duke of Durazzo secretly carried off her younger sister Maria, the promised bride of Louis of Hungary, and married her. For the better understanding of what follows, it is necessary to

observe here that the Princes of Durazzo, the Princes of Taranto, the reigning family in Hungary, and the reigning family in Naples, were all descended from a common ancestor, Charles of Anjou; hence they were all related, being cousins in the second degree.

The coronation of Joanna was fixed for the 20th of September, 1345; and while preparations were going forward for this grand ceremony, the young king and queen retired from Naples in the month of August, and went to take their diversions in the gardens of the Celestine monastery at Aversa. This town, so fatally celebrated for the tragedy which ensued, is situated about fifteen miles from Naples: the queen, who expected soon to become a mother, and whose health had lately been very delicate, appeared restored by the change of air, the tranquillity, and the enchanting scenery around her; all was happiness and repose, and nothing indicated the terrible catastrophe at hand. On the night of the 18th of September Andreas was called from the queen's apartment, by the information that a courier had just arrived from Naples, and waited to confer with him. In the gallery adjoining he was seized by some persons whose names were never exactly known; they stopped his mouth with their gloves, strangled him by means of a cord or handkerchief, and suspended his body from the balcony, whence, the cord breaking from the weight, it fell into the garden. The murderers were proceeding to bury it on the spot; but an alarm being given by the king's nurse, they fled precipitately and made their escape.*

It is necessary to pause for a moment in the narrative, and to observe that the popular accounts of this shocking event, and the accusation against Joanna of having contrived the murder of her unfortunate husband, do not appear founded in truth.

It is not possible to produce here, and separately weigh and examine, all the proofs and arguments brought together by historians, who differ on the question of her guilt or innocence;

* There is a story, often repeated, that Joanna was employed in twisting a silken cord for the purpose of strangling her husband, when he entered her apartment, and asked her what she was doing? To which she replied with a smile, "Twisting a rope to hang you with." It is hardly necessary to add, that this is a mere vulgar tradition, without the least foundation in truth.

but it may be observed, that while all that is adduced against her rests on vulgar report or the invectives of her enemies, there are three considerations which appear conclusive in her favour. In the first place, Joanna had no particular reason to wish for the death of her husband, the father of her infant ; for though it has been asserted by many authors that Joanna hated her husband, and took no pains to conceal her aversion, yet this is as positively denied by others : and if her hatred had been so public, the queen would hardly have had the assurance to make use of the expressions, "my good husband, with whom I always associated without strife," which occur in her letter to the King of Hungary. And if she *had* wished for his death—as she is acknowledged by all to have possessed an extraordinary understanding—she would surely have contrived to execute her purpose in a manner less desperate, less foolish, and less perilous to herself. Secondly, it is agreed by all, that the disposition of Joanna was mild, tender, and generous ; that she was never known to commit an unjust or cruel action either before or after this transaction, or give the slightest indication of such violence of temper, or such depravity of heart, as alone could have impelled her to connive at the assassination of her husband, the father of her unborn child, and this within hearing, if not before her eyes. It is too horrible for belief. The woman who, under such circumstances, could have committed such an atrocious crime at the age of seventeen, could never have either begun or ended there ; yet all historians, even her enemies and accusers, affirm, that from the age of seventeen Joanna was a model of virtue, gentleness, and feminine grace.

Thirdly, not only all the best historians of Provence and Naples, "not only the most worthy, but, what is of as much consequence in such matters, the most enlightened of her contemporaries, men independent of her favour and protection, remarkable for their freedom of censure, personally acquainted with her character, with that of her court and family, and with the political circumstances of her kingdom,—all these acquit her."*

* See the Historical Life of Joanna of Sicily, and Count Orloff's "Mémoires sur Naples."

It is related, that when Joanna was informed of the fate of her husband, she remained for some time speechless, and without shedding a tear. One historian imputes this suspension of her faculties to guilt and confusion; another terms it the effect of terror and horror, which is at least as probable. The queen says of herself, in her letter to the King of Hungary: "I have suffered so much anguish for the death of my beloved husband, that, *stunned* by grief, I had wellnigh died of the same wounds."

When the news of the murder of Andreas was spread through Aversa and Naples, a most extraordinary tumult ensued. The Hungarians, struck with consternation, fled in all directions. Joanna the next morning returned to the capital with a few attendants, and shut herself up in the Castel Novo, where, within two months, she gave birth to a son. Soon after her recovery from her confinement, she took the administration of affairs into her own hands; she formed a council, composed of the friends of her grandfather Robert, and signed a commission to Hugh del Balzo to seek out the murderers of her husband, and execute justice on them without respect of persons. "The assassination of Andreas," says the historian of Joanna, "appears to have been a sudden burst of desperate ferocity in a set of miscreants who feared the loss of their fortunes and lives under the sway of the implacable and equally unprincipled friar;" but who these miscreants were is still uncertain. Some of the chamberlains of Andreas were seized and put to the torture, according to the barbarous and stupid practice of those times. They accused, among others, Philippa the Catanese, who, since the death of Robert, had been created Countess of Montoni; her son, the Count Evoli; her granddaughter, Sancha, a young and beautiful woman; and Count Terlizi, the husband of the latter.

When Hugh de Balzo, invested with the full powers which Joanna herself had bestowed upon him, presented himself before the gates of the Castel Novo, the young queen without hesitation commanded the gates to be thrown open to him. Her astonishment and her anguish may be imagined, when her friends and favourites were summoned before him, accused—upon the evidence of men who had been tortured almost to

death before they had uttered a word to criminate themselves or others—as accessories to the murder of Andreas, and dragged from her protection to expire in the most shocking and lingering torments that ingenious cruelty could devise.

Thenceforward it is observed that a change ensued in the character of Joanna ; and in the death of her husband, and the horrible catastrophe of her foster-mother Philippa, and her companion and playfellow Sancha, she appears to have received a shock from which she never afterwards recovered. Previous to her eighteenth year, her temper had been remarkably frank, cheerful, and confiding ; but from that time a visible alteration took place. Though she displayed equal dignity and mildness in her deportment ; though in the interior of the palace “she was so gracious, gentle, compassionate, and kind, that she seemed rather the companion than the queen of those around her,” (these are the words of Boccaccio,) yet she was always more grave than gay, and was never known to have a familiar friend, favourite, or confidant of either sex, or to put entire trust in any of those about her person. Treachery had come so near her, anguish and fear had struck her so deeply, that confidence and happiness seemed to have fled together ; the spring of her life was changed to winter ; and her dawn, which ought to have been followed by sunshine and the cheerful day, settled into a cold, calm twilight, to be finally swallowed up in storms and midnight darkness.

More than two years after the death of Andreas, Joanna married, by the advice and recommendation of her ministers, her second cousin, Louis of Taranto, a brave, accomplished, and very handsome prince, who, from his singular beauty, acquired the name of Phœbus, or the Day.* Soon afterwards, Louis, King of Hungary, the elder brother of Andreas, raised a party against her, invaded her dominions, and, under pretence

* Count Orloff, in his “*Mémoires historiques sur Naples*,” asserts that Joanna, “*amante trop empressée, ou femme irréfléchie*,” was united to the Prince of Taranto in the first year of her widowhood, which, on a comparison of dates, appears evidently false. The death of Andreas took place in 1345 ; and her union with Louis was solemnized in August 1347. That she had long been attached to her handsome cousin may possibly be true.

of revenging the murder of his brother, proclaimed his intention of seizing the crown for himself. But before he entered the kingdom of Naples as an enemy, he endeavoured to give some colour of justice to his cause by solemnly accusing Joanna before the tribunal of Cola Rienzi, that illustrious democrat, who was at this time at the height of his power at Rome, and considered as the arbitrator of the minor States of Italy. Joanna did not disdain to defend herself by her deputies, and Rienzi heard the pleadings of both parties in public ; but he refused to pronounce judgment between them, and left this great cause undecided. While it was pending, Louis of Hungary continued to advance, and in December 1347 he passed the frontiers of Naples. Wherever he appeared, a black standard was carried before him, on which was painted the murder of Andreas ; a company of mourners, also habited in black, surrounded this horrible banner, on which the populace gazed with affright and disgust. In this terrific array did Louis of Hungary advance without opposition as far as Aversa ; and that ill-omened spot, which had already been the scene of midnight murder, was destined to witness another act of atrocity strongly characteristic of those dark and evil times. Amongst the nobles who joined Louis, upon a promise of safe conduct, was the Duke of Durazzo, who had married the younger sister of Joanna. He was a weak but ambitious man, who seems to have been possessed with the idea, that if Joanna were once deposed or removed, it would make way for the accession of his wife and her children to the throne : he was also one of those who were suspected, but without any reason, of participating in the murder of Andreas. When they arrived at Aversa, the Duke of Durazzo was desired by the King of Hungary to show him the place where his brother Andreas was killed. The Duke replied by denying all knowledge of the place or of the crime ; but Louis, without listening to him, led the way to the fatal balcony in the Celestine monastery : he there accused him as the murderer of his brother, and desired him to prepare for death. Durazzo entreated for mercy, but at a sign from Louis he was stabbed to the heart in his presence, his body thrown over the balcony, and his friends and attendants were forbidden, on pain of death, to

inter it. After the commission of this treacherous and cruel murder, Louis hastened on to Naples. On his approach some of the nobles were induced by bribes and promises to join his party. Some believed, or affected to believe, the queen guilty of the crimes imputed to her; others fled to their castles and fortified themselves separately against the invader, or submitted to his arms. Joanna, taken by surprise, and surrounded by treachery and violence, had yielded to those of her friends and ministers who advised her to take refuge in Provence, the beautiful and ancient inheritance of her family, till the storm was past. She accordingly embarked with her household in three galleys, and sailed from Naples; while the giddy and versatile populace, who wanted resolution and fidelity to defend her from her enemies, crowded along the shores, weeping bitterly, lamenting her departure, and praying for her return.

On her arrival in her Provençal dominions, Joanna landed at Nice, and proceeded to Avignon, where Pope Clement the Sixth then held his court in the utmost splendour. In the presence of that Pontiff, and in a solemn assemblage of the Cardinals and principal clergy, she pleaded her own cause against the King of Hungary, and proved the falsehood of all the imputations against her. Her address on this occasion, which she composed in the Latin tongue, and pronounced herself, has been described as "the most powerful specimen of female oratory ever recorded in history." The Hungarian ambassadors, sent by the king, her enemy, to plead against her, were so confounded that they attempted no reply to her defence. The Pope and the Cardinals unanimously acquitted her, with every expression of honour and admiration, and her Provençal nobility crowded round her to proffer their services for the recovery of her Neapolitan dominions. While residing in Provence, Joanna was joined by her sister Maria, the widow of the murdered Durazzo, who with her infant children had escaped almost by miracle from the ruthless conqueror. The two sisters, who had always been affectionately attached to each other, met with transport, and Joanna adopted the children of Maria as her own.

Naples, in the meantime, had been a scene of horror. Louis, after staining that city with the blood of its chief inhabitants,

and, with his rude Hungarian followers and German mercenaries, scattering terror and lamentation along its beautiful shores, was at length driven away by a terrible pestilence which had prevailed more or less throughout the whole of Italy, and extended its ravages to other parts of Europe. This was the memorable plague of which Boccaccio has left us so striking a description, and of which Petrarch's Laura died at Avignon about three weeks after the arrival of Queen Joanna in that city. On his departure from Naples, Louis left as his lieutenant Conrad Wolf, a wretch worthy of his name, whose cruelties and exactions completed the desolation of that devoted country. The tyrannical and rapacious government of the Hungarians at length so disgusted and exasperated the Neapolitans, that they rose with one accord against the invaders, and the nobility sent a deputation to Joanna, inviting her to return, and promising their support and aid against her enemies. Joanna gladly availed herself of this summons, and with a numerous and brilliant retinue of noble knights, who had sworn to die in her cause, she returned to Naples, where she was welcomed by her people with the most enthusiastic rapture. The court resumed its gaiety and splendour, for Louis of Taranto, the husband of Joanna, was in his habits as princely and magnificent as he was brave and handsome in person, and almost all the young nobility crowded to their banners. Those who in the late struggle had been disaffected or neutral were pardoned ; those who had stood faithful, and had suffered from the tyranny of the Hungarians, were welcomed with joy and loaded with gifts and honours. Some attempts were made to enter into an accommodation with Louis of Hungary ; but that fierce and cruel monarch, enraged at a reverse so little expected, rejected all pacific overtures with disdain, and returning with a large army, he again invaded Naples, but not with the same success ; the people had learned the difference between his government and that of the mild Joanna, and everywhere they rose against him. Louis of Taranto led the armies of the Queen, and opposed the mercenaries of Hungary with equal valour and prudence ; the war still lasted two years, before the troops of the Hungarian king were finally driven from Naples, and it was marked by many vicissitudes, by many daring

exploits, and by the usual accompaniments of misery, bloodshed, and desolation. Joanna, feeling for the wretched condition of her subjects, endeavoured to alleviate it by every means in her power ; and Louis of Taranto, with the chivalrous feeling which distinguished his age and personal character, offered to terminate the horrors of this domestic war by encountering the King of Hungary in a single combat. The Hungarian monarch accepted the challenge; but the duel, for some unknown reasons, did not take place. Pope Clement sent his legate to mediate between the two parties, and the King of Hungary, finding it impossible to retain possession of Naples, concluded a treaty on the terms required by Joanna ; that is, the establishment of the government according to the will of her grandfather Robert, and the title of king for her husband, Louis of Taranto.

Two incidents connected with this treaty will serve to show the spirit of those times, in the gross superstition which could cloud a brilliant intellect, and the magnanimity which could occasionally mingle with the most detestable ferocity. Joanna, in solemnly repeating her declaration of innocence relative to the murder of Andreas, attributed the dissensions which existed between them to *sorcery*: and Louis of Hungary refused to accept the one hundred thousand florins which the Pope had adjudged to him as an indemnity for the expenses of the war, saying, with a fierce generosity, "I did not come hither to sell my brother's blood, but to avenge it !"

Peace was thus restored in 1353, after a sanguinary contest which had lasted more than four years from the first invasion of Louis of Hungary. A Bull being granted by Pope Clement for the coronation of Joanna and Louis, the ceremony took place at Naples, and was performed with extraordinary splendour and rejoicings. Magnificent recompenses were distributed by the young sovereigns to those who had served them faithfully during the late war. The nobility tendered their allegiance with one accord ; the populace, enchanted by the transition from a cruel war to the blessings of peace, and by their delivery from their Hungarian oppressors, threw up their caps and shouted their congratulations ; the streets of Naples resounded with joy and exultation, and the whole land seemed to burst into a hymn

of thanksgiving at this determination of all disasters, this promise of future felicity and peace. But poor Joanna ! she was doomed to taste of grief in every possible form ; and on this great day of triumph, which beheld her at length securely seated on the throne of her fathers, even while the shout of revelry echoed round her palace, there was weeping and wailing within. When, after their coronation, Louis and Joanna returned from their solemn cavalcade round the city, they found their only child, then about four years old, dead in her cradle : by what accident does not appear, but apparently of some sudden fit or other disorder incidental to childhood. During the late war Joanna's son by Andreas had been carried off into Hungary, and had died there ; and another little daughter, born subsequently, also perished in her infancy : we may well believe that for sorrows and privations such as these no outward prosperity could console the mother's heart.

In the year 1356 Joanna and Louis were invited by the Sicilians to reign over their country, and the next year Joanna was solemnly crowned at Messina ; but before she had entirely settled the government of her new kingdom, she was recalled to Naples by fresh disturbances and contentions, which in her absence had broken out between Philip of Taranto, the elder brother of her husband, and Louis of Durazzo, the brother of that Duke of Durazzo who had married her sister, and had been murdered by the King of Hungary. Both these princes were reduced to submission ; and on the death of Louis of Durazzo, whose turbulence and haughtiness had often agitated her kingdom and disquieted her own domestic peace, Joanna gave a strong proof of her benevolent and forgiving disposition. She took under her peculiar care his orphan son, Charles of Durazzo, educated him at her own charge, and treated him in all respects with the tenderness of a mother. This boy, destined to cause the destruction of his benefactress, was then about twelve years old.

Three years of comparative tranquillity ensued. In 1362 Louis of Taranto died of a fever, the consequence of his own intemperance. He had latterly given himself up to a course of dissipation, which must have grieved and displeased his consort ; but she loved him to the last, in spite of the wrongs

and infidelities of which she had too often to complain. One of the women about the court, who was mistress of Louis, had endeavoured to palliate her own misconduct by calumniating the queen. Louis either believed, or pretended to believe, this slander; he burst into the most violent reproaches against his wife; and it is even said that, in the height of his fury, he struck her. Joanna sent for the woman, confronted her with her husband, and easily proved the falsehood of both; but instead of punishing her rival and accuser, she merely dismissed her from the court, saying with dignity, "Thank your God, that your enemy is your queen!" If we consider the passionate attachment which Joanna entertained for her husband, and the wrongs she had just received as a woman, a wife, and a sovereign, a nobler, a more beautiful instance of female magnanimity can hardly be imagined.

Being left a second time a widow, and without children, Joanna was advised by her council to enter into a third marriage, as necessary to the tranquillity of her kingdom. She agreed to the election of her ministers, whose choice had fallen on James of Majorca, the son of the King of Majorca, and their union was celebrated with great magnificence. The marriage-feast was held at Gaëta, and a lovelier spot could hardly have been chosen to celebrate a royal bridal. A very singular incident distinguished the festivities on this occasion; Joanna had chosen as her partner in the dance Prince Galeazzo of Mantua, who, in his rapture for such courteous condescension, made a vow that he would requite the honour she had done him, by bringing to the foot of her throne two captive knights, to be disposed of as she thought fit. At the end of a year he appeared before her with two knights of noble blood and approved valour, whom he had vanquished in single combat, and presented them to her as her slaves by all the laws of chivalry. Galeazzo having thus acquitted himself of his vow, the queen equally fulfilled her duty as a lady and a princess; she gave the knights their freedom, and sent them back to their country loaded with rich presents.

The Prince of Majorca bore a high character for honour and bravery. But Joanna was not destined to derive either happiness or advantage from this most luckless marriage.

Within three months after their union, her husband quitted her to avenge the death of his father, who had been treacherously murdered by Peter, King of Arragon. Joanna was therefore left alone and unaided to guide her fickle people and rule her turbulent nobility. She had the grief to hear that her husband, whose valour was more rash than prudent, was first defeated, and afterwards—though supported by the friendship and assistance of Edward the Black Prince—taken prisoner and detained in Arragon. His generous queen paid an immense ransom for his freedom; but no sooner had he returned to Naples than he prepared another expedition to avenge his father. Joanna used every argument, and even descended to entreaties, to dissuade him from his purpose, but in vain; he pursued the war with all the inveterate obstinacy of hatred and revenge, and in the midst of his violent career he fell sick and died.

Joanna was again advised by her council to marry; but this time she deliberately refused, and resolved to struggle alone against the difficulties of her situation, rather than again subject herself to the pain and continual anxiety she had suffered from her union with James of Majorca.

The twelve following years, during which Joanna held the reins of government unassisted and uncontrolled, were marked by successes abroad and tranquillity and prosperity at home. The bands of robbers who had infested her kingdom were destroyed or dispersed: by a mixture of firmness and gentleness she curbed the pride of her nobility, so that it was said, “they *trembled* at her frown, while they courted her smiles.” The strict administration of justice in her dominions, the security of the roads, and her excellent ordinances for the encouragement of commerce, were the admiration of neighbouring states. The mariner’s compass was first constructed, if not invented, in her reign, by one of her subjects, Gioja Flavio, a mathematician of Amalfi. Her court was considered one of the most brilliant in Europe, and the modesty of her own manners maintained its propriety. Her patronage of the arts and learning was liberal, and even magnificent. She built many churches and palaces, and endowed the hospital of St. Anthony. Those who have driven along the beautiful shore of the Mergellina, under the promontory of

Posilippo, will remember the ruins of the unfinished palace beneath the cliff, with the blue sea breaking against its foundations—the “palace of Queen Joanna,” as it is still called. The completion of this edifice was apparently interrupted by her subsequent misfortunes. Nothing can be more splendid than its situation ; nor more mournful in its appearance and the associations connected with it.

Joanna at this time undertook no foreign wars. Satisfied with defending her own people and her own rights, she uniformly protected the poor against the rich, and the weak against the strong ; and appears to have been really one of the most blameless women and one of the most wise and magnanimous sovereigns that ever filled a throne ; yet the close of her life was darkened by misfortunes even worse than those which assailed her in her youth. She had adopted, as has been already related, Charles of Durazzo, and married him to her favourite niece Margaret, the daughter of her sister Maria. Charles of Durazzo possessed many great qualities which justified this preference, and the intentions of the queen to bequeath him her crown ; but he had boundless ambition, a restless and warlike temper, and instead of remaining near Joanna as her defender and counsellor, (as her wishes and his own interests equally required of him,) he left her to seek military distinction under the banners of her old enemy the King of Hungary. She was thus once more left alone ; and in a situation of great difficulty and danger, she was induced to enter into a fourth marriage, at the age of forty-six : her choice fell on Otho of Brunswick, a prince of the Guelph family, distinguished for almost every accomplishment of mind and person, and of years equal to her own. Without demanding the title of king, and arrogating any power to himself, this generous, brave, and amiable man won and deserved the entire affection of his queen, and maintained her throne for some time in peace and security.

In the fourteenth century, during the latter years of Joanna's reign, two rival Popes divided Christendom between them. The Emperor of Germany, the Kings of England, Denmark, Sweden, and Hungary, and Bohemia, most of the States of Italy and Flanders, adhered to Pope Urban VI. ; while the Kings of

France, Spain, Naples, Scotland, Cyprus, Savoy, the Dukedom of Austria, some of the Italian and many of the German States, acknowledged Clement VII. This event, which ranks among the grand data of modern history, is called the "Great Schism of the West."

Clement, who was a native of Geneva, and held his court at Avignon, was mild, learned, and pious; Urban, on the contrary, was violent, arrogant, treacherous, and cruel: he took up his residence at Rome, and during his pontificate that city was a scene of atrocity and oppression almost unparalleled, even in the time of the Neros and Caligulas.

Urban had a nephew named Butillo, whom it was his ambition to raise to an independent principality. In those days the Popes assumed to themselves the right of appointing and dethroning monarchs; and Urban, at the very moment that he professed a friendship for Joanna and accepted her gifts, dispatched a messenger to Charles of Durazzo, and offered to grant him the investiture of the crown of Naples, provided he would yield to his nephew Butillo certain principalities in that kingdom. Charles of Durazzo was at first shocked at a proposal so monstrous; but he listened, debated, and reflected, till, by continually brooding over this project, its atrocity and ingratitude lessened to his view, and the temptation hourly increased. Before he could take any open measures against his benefactress, it was necessary to withdraw his wife and children from her power: they had constantly resided in the palace of Joanna, as a part of her family, and were all treated by her with true maternal tenderness. When Margaret of Durazzo required permission to leave Naples and join her husband, the generous queen suspected the motive of the request—for she had received some intimation of the designs entertained by Charles of Durazzo, and of his secret negotiations with the Pope—yet she suffered her niece to depart with all the honours due to her rank. It was their first separation and their last parting, for they never met again.

A few weeks afterwards, in 1381, Charles of Durazzo entered Italy at the head of a large army, and marched to take possession of the kingdom, which he claimed by the Pope's investiture, in defiance of every law of justice, right, and gratitude.

He advanced to Naples, and attacked Joanna in her capital. Otho of Brunswick had levied an army to oppose him, and while the two parties were contending round the walls, and in the streets of Naples, the queen, who was in hourly expectation of succours from Provence, threw herself for present security into the fortress of the Castel Novo, and commanded the gates to be shut. At that moment a crowd of old men, women, and children, and a number of the clergy, flying from the ferocious enemy, presented themselves before the entrance, and implored a refuge and protection. Joanna had only a certain quantity of provisions : to admit these people was imprudent, to refuse them barbarous. She could not harden her heart against their cries and entreaties, and commanded them to be taken in to share her last asylum. Her generosity was fatal to her, for thus the provisions which would have lasted seven months were consumed in one. Being in expectation of relief from Provence, and from her brave husband, who was still before the walls, though the partisans of Durazzo had possession of the city, Joanna held out to the last, and until she and her companions had endured the extremity of famine. Two of her nieces were with her : the eldest of these, Agnes, Duchess of Durazzo, was a woman of a covetous spirit, who had accumulated great riches ; yet before the siege she had refused, on some pretence, to lend the queen a sum of money to aid in her defence. When this woman beheld the terrible sufferings of Joanna, and the miserable extremity to which herself and others were reduced, she was seized with vain remorse. She filled an immense vase with her gold and jewels, and carrying it into the apartment of the queen, she laid it at her feet, in silence and in tears. Joanna thanked her with a sad smile, but added, "that it was now too late. A sack of wheat," said she, "were more precious to me now, my fair niece, than all this treasure which you have reserved only to fall a prey to our common enemy !"

Meantime Otho of Brunswick made a desperate attempt to release his queen. He assembled all his forces, and attacked Durazzo immediately under the walls of the city. A battle ensued, which was obstinately contested ; but neither Otho's talents as a commander, nor his bravery, animated as he was by honour and despair, availed him : he was wounded, struck

from his horse, and taken prisoner, and his troops, overpowered and disheartened, fled towards Aversa. After this disastrous defeat it was in vain for Joanna to resist. She had pledged herself, if not relieved, to surrender on the 26th of August, and accordingly on that day Charles of Durazzo entered the castle as conqueror ; but so much did his former habits of love and reverence for the queen prevail even at such a moment, that from an involuntary impulse he fell at the feet of his unhappy captive, and poured forth excuses and professions of respect ; he even addressed her by the tender and sacred name of *mother*—the name he had been accustomed to give her in his childish years.

The queen, restraining her indignation, merely replied by demanding for herself and her husband the treatment due to their rank, and recommending her friends in the castle to his mercy, particularly the women and clergy.

Four days after her surrender the expected succours arrived from Provence. Ten galleys laden with provisions sailed into the bay of Naples, which, had they reached her before, would have saved her country, her throne, and her life. When Charles of Durazzo had the queen in his power, he endeavoured, first, to persuade, and then to force her to give up her title to the kingdom, and yield him up the sovereignty of Provence ; and after many conferences he began to hope that he had at last terrified or beguiled her into making some concession in his favour. With this idea he granted a safe-conduct to the commanders of the Provençal galleys, and other chiefs who yet remained faithful to Joanna, and permitted them to appear in her presence for the last time ; but, instead of the result he had expected, this high-minded woman seized the opportunity to assert her own dignity and power, and confound her oppressor. She began by gently upbraiding her friends with the tardiness of their arrival ; she then solemnly revoked the declaration she had formerly made in favour of Durazzo, claimed their allegiance for Louis of Anjou, as her heir and successor, and commanded them never to acknowledge as their sovereign the ungrateful traitor and usurper who had seized her throne, and now held her a prisoner in her own palace. “If ever,” said she, “you are told hereafter that I have admitted

his unjust claims, believe it not ! even if they place before you an act signed by my hand, regard it as false, or extorted from me by fraud or violence—believe it not !—believe not your own eyes !—believe nothing but these tears which I shed before you, and avenge them !”

Her adherents swore to obey her last commands, and left her presence weeping as they went. Durazzo, exasperated by her firmness, ordered her to be more closely confined, and for eight months she suffered all the miseries and insults that could be heaped on her by a cruel and ungrateful adversary. Every day, however, fresh disturbances arose to distract him : the friends of Joanna were everywhere assembling ; the populace were ready to rise in her behalf, and many nobles were in open rebellion against him. Perhaps Charles of Durazzo had not in the first instance contemplated the monstrous crime to which he was now driven, and by which he consummated his treason ; but who that plunges into the torrent of ambition can tell whither it will carry him ? The usurper, finding that as long as Joanna existed there was neither repose nor security for him, resolved on her destruction. He dispatched her to the castle of Muro, a dismal and solitary fortress in the Apennines, about sixty miles from Naples : and her spirit still holding out, even in this wretched abode, so that his threats were only answered by defiance, and his persuasions by scorn he sent four Hungarian soldiers with orders to put her to death. The manner of her assassination is not certain, but it is most probable she was either strangled or suffocated ; for when her body was afterwards exposed to public view in the church of Santa Chiara, it exhibited no sign of external violence. She was murdered on the 22d of May, 1382, after a reign of thirty-nine years.

Such was the end of Queen Joanna ; “a most rare and noble lady,” a just and beneficent queen, of whom Boccaccio has left this memorable testimony : “I not only esteem her illustrious and resplendent by conspicuous excellence, but the singular pride of Italy, and such as altogether no other nation has ever seen her equal.”

Joanna was buried in the church of Santa Chiara, at Naples, where her tomb is now to be seen. Her memory is still revered

by the populace, and her name familiar on their lips. If you ask a Neapolitan in the street, Who built such a palace, or such a church? the answer is generally the same, "Our Queen Joanna."

Otho of Brunswick, her brave husband, remained two years a prisoner; he was afterwards released, on condition that he should never again enter the kingdom of Naples, and died on the field of battle, fighting in the cause of Louis of Anjou, the heir of Joanna. Her assassin, Charles of Durazzo, met with a doom which should seem to have been contrived by the avenging furies. After a turbulent, unhappy reign of three short years, he deemed himself securely fixed on the throne of Naples, and proceeded to Hungary to wrest that crown from Maria, the daughter and heiress of Louis of Hungary, the old enemy of Queen Joanna. The young Queen of Hungary, who was then about fifteen, was of a generous, frank, and noble nature; but her mother, the Regent Elizabeth, was more than a match for Durazzo in artifice and cruelty. By her machinations he was decoyed into the apartment of Maria, and while he stood reading a paper, a gigantic Hungarian, secretly stationed for that purpose, felled him to the earth with his sabre. His death, however, was not instantaneous: he lingered for two days in agonies, neglected and abandoned; at length his enemies, becoming impatient of his prolonged existence, and fearful of his recovery, caused him to be suffocated or strangled.

"Voilà," says Brantome, after relating the death of Joanna and the fate of her murderer, "*Voilà un juste jugement de Dieu, et une noble et brave princesse vengeresse de son sang innocent. Voilà aussi la fin de cette brave reine qu'on a calmée bien légèrement.*"

Gaillard, in his "*Rivalité de la France et de l'Espagne*," terminates his account of Joanna of Naples by observing, that history affords no subject more powerfully dramatic than the life of this queen. In fact, what splendid materials for tragedy and romance—for a Shakspeare or a Scott—in the characters, passions, incidents, and wild vicissitudes of which I have just given a rapid and superficial sketch! Joanna herself, with all her elegance and loveliness, her tenderness and her magnanimity; her wrongs, her sorrows, and her miserable end; the

gifted, intriguing Catanese ; her daughter, the beautiful and faithful Sancha ; the villain friar ; the chivalrous Prince of Taranto ; the fierce, implacable Louis of Hungary ; the perfidious, ambitious Durazzo ; with Boccaccio and his Fiammetta ; and then Petrarch appearing occasionally among them like a superior intelligence, a being of another sphere : what a group to be brought together within the same canvas ! what variety ! what brilliant contrast ! what light and shade ! what capabilities of scenery and costume, in the country, the manners, and the age ! La Harpe has written a tragedy on the story of Joanna which is as dry and formal as the rest of his tragedies : the use he has made of the magnificent materials before him reminds us of the Pontiff who demolished the interior of the Colosseum to build himself a palace out of its sublime fragments. There is also a French novel founded on the story of Philippa, entitled "*L'Histoire de la Catanoise*," and published in 1731, but I have not been able to meet with it.



JOANNA II.

QUEEN OF NAPLES.

THE crimes and miseries of his family ceased not with the horrible catastrophe of Durazzo. He left two children, who wore successively his usurped crown. Ladislas, his son, equally ambitious, cruel, and unprincipled, after a reign of thirty years spent in contending for the possession of his throne, perished at length the victim of his own depravities. During this period literature was neglected, the arts declined; and Ladislas, while he lived, was considered as the scourge of the countries he governed. He died in 1414, and was succeeded by his sister, the Princess Joanna. In the Neapolitan histories the two Joannas are distinguished as "Queen Giovanna" and "Queen Giovannella," and they are so very different in conduct and character, that in justice to Joanna the *first*, she should never be confounded with Joanna the *second*. The virtues and talents of the former could not indeed avert the most terrible misfortunes from herself and her kingdom; but a mere caprice of her feeble and worthless namesake entailed upon Italy two centuries of desolating war. She it was who called in those herds of French wolves, which, rushing down the Alps, "drank th' ensanguined waters of the Po," and spread war, pestilence, and famine through the fertile plains of Southern Italy. There was a prophecy current at Naples, in her time, that "the last of the Durazzi should be the ruin of her country;" and Joanna, who was perhaps the immediate occasion of this prophecy, was certainly the remote cause of its fulfilment.

She was born at Naples in 1371, and was the only daughter of Charles of Durazzo, by his wife Margaret, the favourite niece and adopted daughter of the first Joanna. At the death of her father she was about fifteen, and during the minority of her brother Ladislas remained under the guardianship of her mother, who had been declared Regent. The kingdom was divided between the party of Ladislas and that of Louis of Anjou, who were both in their infancy ; and Margaret of Durazzo, the mother of Ladislas, and Marie de Blois, the mother of Louis, were at the head of the respective parties. These two women were very different in character, but they were equal in talents, and for twenty years carried on the terrible struggle for power with equal boldness, capacity, and obstinacy, while armies moved at their bidding, and statesmen and warriors were but as the tools with which they worked out their purposes.

Ladislas, as he grew up, displayed all the qualities of a bold but fierce soldier ; his own military talents, combined with the art and the firmness of his mother, and a number of concurring circumstances, at length secured him the superiority over his rival, and about the year 1399 the court was once more fixed at Naples.

Amid these wars and intrigues, in continual vicissitudes of flight or victory, sometimes in a camp or fortress, sometimes in a convent or mixing in the court of her perfidious and profligate brother, Joanna spent the first twenty-eight years of her life. It was proposed in this interval to put an end to the war by uniting Joanna to Louis of Anjou ; but the young prince shrank with horror from the idea of marrying the daughter of a murderer, and his mother found it impossible to vanquish his repugnance to the match. When Ladislas was at length in peaceable possession of his kingdom, his first care was to consolidate his power by forming a suitable alliance for his sister ; and he married her, in 1403, to William, the son of Leopold III. Duke of Austria : within three years she became a widow, and returned to Naples, where she resided in the court of her brother during the remainder of his reign.

The conduct of Joanna both before and after her marriage had been scandalously profligate : equally without beauty or virtue, she yet contrived to keep a strong party round her, for

she had talents of a certain class, and what she wanted in understanding was supplied by artifice. All the opprobrium with which her former life had covered her did not prevent her from being proclaimed queen, as the heiress of her brother Ladislas, and on his death, in 1414, his sceptre, ill-gotten and blood-stained as it was, passed into her hands to be farther polluted and degraded, and at length flung, like a fire-brand, between the rival houses of France and Spain. Joanna was in her forty-fourth year when she ascended the throne. Among the unworthy favourites who had surrounded her as duchess was a certain Pandolfo Alogo, a man of plebeian birth, but of singular beauty of person; he had been her cupbearer, and on her accession she created him grand seneschal, or chamberlain, one of the highest offices under the crown, since it gave him the disposal of the principal part of the revenues: his power over the queen was unbounded, and he used it, or rather abused it, with a degree of audacity which rendered himself an object of hatred and his mistress of scorn.

But in a short time he found a formidable rival in the famous Sforza, the first of that name, and founder of that dynasty of sovereigns which afterwards reigned over Milan.

During the intestine wars which for the last fifty years had set at variance all the minor States of Italy a class of men had arisen, who by degrees almost equalled themselves with princes. These were the *Condottieri*, or leaders of mercenary bands, who sold their services for stated periods to the highest bidder, and when not in the pay of any State or sovereign lived by plunder or by raising contributions on the towns and peasantry. Sforza, whose real name was Muzio Attendola, had risen from the ranks by his valour and intelligence during the reign of Ladislas. He was originally a peasant, and when at work in a field was accosted by some soldiers, and asked if he would enlist; he hesitated: "Let me throw my mattock on that oak, and if it remains there I will." It was caught by a branch, and hung suspended; and regarding it as a sign from heaven he enlisted.* He was distinguished as one of the most formidable of these

* "His grandson in the palace at Milan said to Paulus Jovius, 'You behold these guards and all this grandeur: I owe everything to the branch of oak that caught my grandfather's mattock.'"

Condottieri, from the number and discipline of his followers, as well as his own military prowess; and on the accession of Joanna he was considered as the most efficient support of her throne. His exploits, his bravery, and his personal advantages gradually gained him an ascendancy over the weak, excitable Joanna; but Pandolfo Alopo, who saw with terror the decline of his power, contrived to fill the queen's mind with jealousy, and at length extorted from her an order by which Sforza was suddenly arrested and closely imprisoned. The contentions and intrigues of these two favourites had thrown the whole kingdom into confusion, and excited the indignation of the nobility, and the murmurs or derision of the populace. The counsellors of Joanna represented that the only expedient to restore tranquillity was a marriage with some foreign prince, whose firm administration would awe her subjects, and strengthen her government at home and abroad. Though the queen was no longer young, and her frailties but too public, a crowd of competitors presented themselves, and her choice fell on James de Bourbon, Count de la Marche, a nobleman of illustrious birth, but without sovereign power: he was distinguished as a military leader, and possessed of many generous and elevated qualities; but it was not to these he owed the honour or dishonour of Joanna's preference. The Count de la Marche was distantly related to Charles VI., the reigning King of France; and the queen and her counsellors hoped that by this election they would detach the French king from the interest of Louis of Anjou, who had never ceased to advance his claims to the crown of Naples. Pandolfo Alopo had done everything in his power to avert this intended marriage; he beheld in a legitimate partner of the throne and heart of Joanna the downfall of his own disgraceful power. But finding that the unanimous voice of the nobles and the people rendered such a measure inevitable, he endeavoured to provide for his own safety by forming a numerous party against James de Bourbon, previous to his arrival. Farther to strengthen himself, he made overtures to Sforza, who remained in his dungeon, in perfect ignorance of the cause or the author of his disgrace; him Alopo visited, expressed his pity for his misfortunes, and assured him that his own influence and that of his sister

Catherine d'Alopo, should be employed in his favour. Having thus raised the hopes and the spirits of the prisoner, he returned a few days after: "My sister," said he, "has been indefatigable in her exertions for you, and you well know, illustrious Sforza, that even my power is as nothing compared to hers: I now come from her to tell you, that you are not only free, but that the queen acknowledges her injustice towards you, restores you to her favour, and offers you once more the baton of Grand Constable, which in her name I bring you."

Alopo having thus liberated his rival from the dungeon to which his own machinations had condemned him, found it easy to induce him to accept the hand of the woman to whom he believed himself so much indebted, and this strange coalition was sealed by the marriage of Sforza with Catherine d'Alopo. While these intrigues were going on in the court of Naples, the Count de la Marche, attended by a brilliant train of French knights, arrived to claim the hand of his bride. The marriage was celebrated with due magnificence, and on the same day Joanna bestowed on her husband the title of king. She was then in her forty-sixth year.

If the queen had hoped to find in the Count de la Marche a convenient husband, who would consider the honour of sharing her throne sufficient amends for a dishonoured bed; or if Pandolfo and Sforza had expected to meet with a monarch who was to be swayed to their purposes, and to retain either by their own audacity or the influence of the queen the power they had alternately exercised; all were equally mistaken. The new king had believed, or wished to believe, that the reports of Joanna's conduct were either false or exaggerated; but after his arrival at Naples the whole truth by degrees opened upon him, disclosures the most wounding to a husband's ear met him on every side, and his was not a spirit tamely to submit to disgrace. Shame, jealousy, and rage by turns possessed him, and using the power and the dignity of a king to revenge his injuries, he ordered Pandolfo and Sforza to be seized and imprisoned; the former was first put to the torture, confessed his guilt, and was then beheaded; others of the queen's immediate favourites and dependents were put to death or banished; and Joanna herself was confined to her own apart-

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ments, deprived of all the honours due to her rank, and guarded day and night by a French captain, one of her husband's retainers, an ill-favoured, iron-visaged old man, with a heart as hard as his armour, equally inaccessible to pity and bribery. Here for some months Joanna spent her time in weeping over her fate, rather than lamenting her past errors, and forming projects of escape, not vows of reformation.

In the meantime James de Bourbon governed almost absolutely in her name and his own. Joanna had in many instances incurred the just contempt of her subjects; but her mild rule and gentle disposition, contrasted with the tyranny and ferocity of Ladislas, had gained her many hearts; and the Neapolitans could not look on with absolute indifference, while her husband, a foreigner, treated their native queen with a degree of severity and indignity, which at length roused their Italian blood to mutiny and vengeance. The imprudence of James furnished them other causes of discontent: he committed the usual but dangerous error of preferring his own countrymen to the people he had come to govern; and honours and offices were lavished on his French followers, to the exclusion of the Neapolitans, who made the real or imagined wrongs of the queen the plea for their discontent and disaffection. There were others, however, who were apparently influenced by more honourable or more disinterested motives; and at the head of these was a young Neapolitan, whose name was Gianni, or Sergiano Carraccioli. Joanna, by an artful show of submission to her husband's will, and by basely betraying one or two of her own friends into his power, had so wrought upon him, that he gave her permission to attend a marriage feast given by one of the nobles who were in the plot. Carraccioli and his friends were in waiting to receive her, fell upon her guards, massacred them, and carried off the queen in triumph to the Castel Capuana, calling on the Neapolitans to rise in her behalf. The people were seized with a kind of loyal intoxication; they flew to arms, surrounded the Castel Novo with shouts of execration, and were about to force the gates and inflict summary vengeance on the devoted king, when he escaped by a private way, and threw himself, with a few friends, into the Castel del Ovo—a fortress situated upon a

rock in the bay of Naples, and joined to the mainland only by a narrow mole, defended by drawbridges.

Joanna was once more absolute upon her throne, and her first care was to reward her liberators : the chivalrous Carraccioli, who had first engaged in her cause, quickly assumed that ascendancy in her heart and in her counsels which had been possessed by Alopo ; and every favour that the gratitude of a woman and a queen could bestow was freely lavished on him. Sforza was released from his dungeon ; all the French were deprived of their offices, which were bestowed on Neapolitans, and the court became once more a scene of gaiety, dissipation, and intrigue.

In the meantime James de Bourbon remained shut up in the Castel del Ovo, where, being in want of provisions, and all succours intercepted, he would have been forced to surrender at discretion, but for the interference of some of Joanna's wisest counsellors, who were anxious to avoid this additional scandal ; they undertook to negotiate between the queen and her husband ; and at length a hollow reconciliation was effected on terms the most humiliating to James. It was agreed that he should resign the title of king, and be content with that of Prince of Taranto ; that all his French followers should be dismissed from his service and sent back to France ; and that the sovereign power should be lodged exclusively in the person of the queen. To these hard conditions the unfortunate prince acceded, not without many a painful struggle between pride and necessity ; but his situation was critical and admitted no alternative : he signed the articles submitted to him, and returned to inhabit the royal palace, no longer as king, but merely as the husband of the queen.

Where mutual wrongs and injuries, and those of the most unpardonable description, had struck so deep, it could hardly be expected that a reconciliation on such terms could be either sincere or durable. James felt himself a spectacle of derision and humiliation in a court crowded by insolent and aspiring favourites, and his gloomy unbending deportment betrayed his internal disgust. Joanna, who was a better dissembler, concealed her feelings, and only waited a favourable opportunity to rid herself of one whom she now regarded merely as a

constraint on her pleasures and a spy on her actions. The vengeance of the queen was for some time retarded by the policy of Carraccioli, but it was not the less determined, and the moment at length arrived. One evening, as they were seated at supper in the palace, a dispute arose relative to some of the French knights who still remained in the kingdom, contrary, as Joanna averred, to the express stipulation on that subject. The contention rose high ; and at length James rising from the table, with some strong expressions of contempt and indignation, retired to his own apartment. Joanna, instigated by Carraccioli, had previously taken her measures ; she immediately ordered the doors to be barred and bolted, placed a guard before them, and that chamber became the dungeon of her husband for three long years. It was now her turn to tyrannize ; and though a natural mildness of temper prevented her from proceeding to the last extremities against her unfortunate husband, yet no remonstrances or entreaties from the most powerful monarchs could induce her to liberate him, or soften the rigorous treatment to which he was subjected, till Pope Martin V. interfered in his behalf, through his legate Morosini. At his request James was released, and retired almost immediately to his principality of Taranto. Thither persecution and mortification followed him, and at length, soured by disappointment and almost broken-hearted, he returned to France. Passing through Besançon, he was lodged for a few nights in a convent of Franciscans, and in a sudden fit of religious melancholy or enthusiasm he assumed the habit of this order, in which he died about 1438. James deserved a better fate ; but it may be observed, that having married merely from motives of ambition such a woman as Joanna, and accepted the throne from her hands, a little more suavity of temper and conduct had perhaps, ensured his power over her, and enabled him, without compromising his own honour, to remove from her those favourites who had disgraced her court and sullied her reputation. But he had been too rash in his projects of reform ; he began by making himself detested, and this with every personal advantage which might have secured him the heart of his wife and an ascendancy over her mind. All his excellent qualities were neutralized by that gloomy asperity of temper which, if carried into his convent-

cell, must have rendered him as wretched in his character of a monk as he had been in that of a monarch.*

But we must return to Joanna. The power of Carraccioli daily increased, so that, under the title of seneschal of the palace, he in fact reigned as king. He was a man of consummate art as well as great ambition, and before his authority was perfectly established, his government was so conducted as to please both the nobles and the people. Were there any whose talents or whose accomplishments made him dread a rival in power or in love?—he quietly removed them from the precincts of the court, by giving them some honourable employment at a distance. Thus the young Count Origlia, who had attracted the notice of Joanna, was sent as ambassador to the Council of Constance—an office which he accepted with unsuspecting gratitude; while Sforza, the valiant Sforza, was dispatched to Rome, to watch over the queen's interests in that city, and to oppose another famous leader of the age, Braccio, who had sold his services to the Pope.

But it was not long before Sforza began to penetrate the designs of his rival. Carraccioli, by withholding money and supplies for the troops, continually crossed his best concerted measures, and checked the progress of his arms. Sforza, exasperated by his treachery, and having in vain attempted to open the queen's eyes to the real character of her favourite, tendered back his ensigns of command and the royal banner, under which he had hitherto conquered in her name. Having

* An old French author, who does not give James much credit for his conversion, draws a ludicrous picture of him in his monkish habiliments:—"Olivier de la Marche, qui était alors à Besançon, et le vit quand ce roi s'y vint rendre Cordelier, dit qu'il se faisait porter par quatre hommes en une civière, telle sans aucune différence que les civières que l'on porte les fumiers et les ordures, et était à demicouché (quel sot et fat !) demi-appuyé et levé à l'encontre d'un méchant dérompu oreiller de plume, vêtu pour toute parure d'une longue robe de gris de petit prix : et était ceint d'une corde nouée à la façon d'un Cordelier, et en la tête avait un gros bonnet blanc, que l'on appelle une culle, nouée ou bridée par dessous le menton. Il ne lui eut fallu qu'une plume de coq sur la bonnette, et voilà le galant bien vêtu ! Je crois que si la Reyne sa femme l'eut ainsi vu habillé et embéguiné, elle, qui était toute gentille et d'esprit, s'en serait bien moquée !"

thus formally renounced her service, he immediately joined the party of Louis of Anjou, whose pretensions to the kingdom of Naples, founded on the last will of Joanna I., were still in full force, and acknowledged by many of the foreign and many of the native princes.

While Louis, supported by the almost invincible Sforza, advanced towards Naples, the queen, or rather Carraccioli, who was now all-powerful, opposed them by a grand stroke of policy. Joanna called in the aid of Don Alphonso, surnamed the Magnanimous, King of Arragon and Sicily, who had some distant hereditary claims upon her throne; and being now too old to offer him her hand, she formally adopted him as her son, and declared him her heir, on condition that he would defend her with heart and arms against her enemies. Alphonso, then in the flower of his age, handsome, brave, ambitious, was engaged by every motive of generosity and policy to attend the summons of an oppressed queen, who besought his assistance, and offered him so rich and enviable a heritage as his recompense. He first dispatched a powerful fleet, with some of his best troops on board; and soon afterwards landed at Naples with a splendid and martial retinue, and made his triumphal entry into that city, July 7, 1421. Braccio, changing sides, was induced to take the command of the queen's troops, and was again opposed to Sforza. These two celebrated generals were personal and intimate friends, though they were rivals in military glory, and almost always combating for opposite interests. After various vicissitudes of war, in which both displayed consummate generalship, Braccio resolved, if possible, to reconcile Sforza to Joanna: he succeeded; Sforza could not resist the entreaties and caresses of the queen, and the flatteries of Alphonso. Again changing sides, with marvellous facility, he assumed the command which Braccio resigned to him, and, with Sforza, victory returned to the banners of Naples.

Joanna, meantime, was declining in age; and her natural feebleness of character increasing with her years, she was more under the personal control of Carraccioli than ever. The favourite, released from his fears of Louis, now dreaded the influence of Alphonso; the brilliant qualities of the latter had

rendered him so popular with the people, and so beloved by Joanna, that Carraccioli beheld himself eclipsed, or feared to be so. He contrived to fill the queen's mind with the darkest suspicions of her adopted son: he called to her recollection the conduct of her father, Charles Durazzo, towards *his* benefactress and adopted parent, the first Joanna: the example was too recent to be forgotten; might not Alphonso remember it too, and profit by it to her ruin? The suggestion once admitted, her own imagination, and the artifices of Carraccioli, soon turned suspicion to conviction. Alphonso, not aware of the mistrust and aversion which were gaining upon the mind of the queen, made an imprudent display of his power, which gave some colour of truth to the insinuations of his enemy; and Joanna no longer saw in him a son and a defender, but an ungrateful traitor, who only watched an opportunity to seize on her kingdom, and carry her off to a dungeon in Spain or Sicily. In an agony of rage and terror she shut herself up in the Castel Capuana, and wrote to Sforza, who was at a distance with his troops, to fly to her succour; he obeyed the summons instantly, and Alphonso and his Arragonese, thus converted into enemies in their own despite, were obliged to stand on the defensive. Several battles were fought, in which Sforza had generally the advantage; but Alphonso took and kept possession of the city of Naples, and made Carraccioli his prisoner: and these and other successes kept the issue doubtful for some time. While the fierce struggle continued, Joanna solemnly revoked her adoption of Alphonso, absolved her subjects from the allegiance they had sworn to him as the heir apparent to her crown, and, with a strange versatility, * declared Louis of Anjou her son and heir in his stead, with all the titles and privileges she had formerly bestowed on Alphonso. Thus Louis found himself, by the most unexpected turn of fortune, by a mere feminine caprice, assured of that throne for which himself, his father, and his grandfather had for forty years striven in vain.

This famous treaty, which was followed by such tremendous

* "Nella instabilità, sola fu stabile," says the Italian historian of Joanna.

consequences, not only to Naples but to all Italy,* was signed by Joanna, at Nola, June 2, 1423, two years after Alphonso had been called over to assist her against Louis.

Whatever disasters eventually hung on this memorable compact, Joanna had no reason to repent it during her own life. Louis had not all the brilliant qualities of Alphonso, but neither had he his restless ambition. Generous, gentle, frank, and brave, he won and deserved the confidence and affection of Joanna, and repaid the favours and honours she had conferred upon him with a submission and devotion more than filial;—the two rivals were indeed worthy of each other, and of the high destiny to which they were called. Neither would abandon his pretensions; but Alphonso was called from Italy by the affairs of Spain, and sailed from Naples in October 1423; he left his brother Don Pedro to continue the war, assisted by Caldora, another famous Condottiere, who, in the true spirit of his military trade, soon afterwards changed sides and went over to Louis.

Joanna had previously redeemed her favourite Carraccioli by exchanging for him many of the best generals of Alphonso, made prisoners by Sforza; and about the beginning of the year 1424 we find Joanna, or rather Carraccioli, again settled tranquilly in the government of Naples. It was not, however, in the power of the favourite to injure Louis of Anjou in the estimation of his mistress. The prudent conduct of that amiable prince gave no cause of umbrage, and Carraccioli was obliged to remain satisfied with removing him on different pretences as far from the court as possible.

Shortly afterwards the tranquillity of Joanna's government was threatened by that turbulent Braccio, who had been alternately her defender and her enemy; and, having lent his sword and skill to all the powers of Italy by turns, had now resolved to win an independent sovereignty for himself: he had seized on Capua, and was now besieging Aquila. Sforza, his old friend and adversary, was sent against this formidable leader. He had proceeded northwards as far as the banks of the river Pescara, when, as he was riding forwards to give his orders to cross the river, his horse plunged

* It led to the invasion of Italy by Charles VIII., which in its turn involved Europe in long and sanguinary wars.

with him into a morass, and horse and rider disappeared : thus, after having stood the encounter of a hundred battles, perished this remarkable man. His death threw the court of Naples into consternation, and Joanna bitterly wept the loss of her friend and defender ; all his titles and offices were at once bestowed on his son Francesco Sforza, except the staff of high constable, which was given to Caldora, with orders to proceed to Aquila. Braccio and Caldora met before the gates of that city ; the former was completely defeated, and died a few days afterwards of his wounds.

The battle of Aquila would have secured to Joanna the tranquil possession of her throne, if the traitor Carraccioli, jealous of the increasing favour of Louis, had not again made overtures to Alphonso ; and the interior of Joanna's palace exhibited at this time a scene of perfidy and depravity from which the mind recoils in disgust. The influence of Carraccioli over the queen had long ceased to be that of affection or confidence, and had become merely a weakness or habit. He treated her with the utmost insolence and arrogance ; it is even related, that when she hesitated to grant his unreasonable demands, he not only reviled her with the most injurious language, but even beat this miserable and doating old woman until she complied with his wishes.

But latterly Carraccioli had met with a degree of obstinacy in his feeble mistress which was wholly unexpected, and appeared to him incomprehensible. This energy she owed, not to herself, but to a new confidant, the Duchess of Sessa, a woman as wicked as Carraccioli, and excelling him infinitely in all the talents of intrigue : she was his deadly but his secret enemy, and had vowed his destruction.

Carraccioli bore the titles of Count of Avellino and Duke of Venosa and of Melfi. He was seneschal of the kingdom, and held other high and important offices ; his riches were incalculable, and his power to all appearance boundless ; but not satisfied with all this, he dared to demand of the queen the investiture of the Principality of Salerno, which had generally been conferred on the princes of the blood royal. Joanna, acting under the influence of the Duchess of Sessa, absolutely refused this request, and even went so far as to

upbraid Carraccioli with his insatiate avidity, which no gifts nor favours could satisfy. The favourite, astonished and furious at a denial so unlooked for, burst into a torrent of reproaches, and, finding these availed nothing, from words he proceeded to outrages ; he struck her a violent blow on the face, which made the blood gush from her mouth, and then turning his back on her, abruptly quitted the apartment, leaving the miserable queen bathed in tears, and almost suffocated with impotent rage. In this condition she was found by the Duchess of Sessa, who from an anteroom had listened to the dispute. The moment was favourable to her views ; she extorted from the queen, without much difficulty, a warrant for the arrest of Carraccioli, and, resolving not to trust to the feebleness of Joanna, she sent a party of her own friends and dependents to execute it—but with secret orders not to arrest, but to assassinate Carraccioli.

On the 17th of August, 1432, the day on which he had celebrated the marriage of his son with the daughter of Caldora, Carraccioli was called from his chamber about midnight, under pretence of a message from the queen ; and the warrant being shown to him, he was at the same moment felled to the ground, and his brains dashed out with a battle-axe. When the news of his death was brought to Joanna, she wept bitterly, and appeared inconsolable ; but all the estates of Carraccioli were confiscated, and his murderers remained unsought for and unpunished.

During the next three years the Duchess of Sessa governed almost absolutely in the queen's name ; and sometimes intriguing with Alphonso, sometimes with Louis, she kept the rivalry of these princes constantly alive, and the court and kingdom in perplexity and confusion. At length, in 1434, Louis of Anjou died of a fever at Cosenza in Calabria. His fidelity and devotion to the queen, his adopted mother, had never been shaken either by her caprices, or the intrigues and provocations of her unworthy favourites ; and Joanna was perhaps more truly attached to him than she had ever been to any human being. Her grief for his loss was so deep and so sincere, her tears so incessant, that her feeble frame sank under the weight of affliction, and within a few

weeks after the death of Louis she expired, in the 65th year of her age, after an unhappy, disgraceful, and unquiet reign of twenty years. Her people could not respect her, but neither could they hate her: all her faults and follies could not prevent her from being loved and lamented. Such is the influence which a mild temper, and sweet and gracious manners, can exercise from a throne; but had she never reigned, what disgrace had been spared to her memory, what mischief and what misery to her country! Her few good qualities were buried with her, but "the evil that she did lived after her." The arts and sciences which had flourished under Robert, and the first Joanna, fled in affright before the ruffian Ladislas, and turned away in shame from the corrupt court of his sister. She had neither the understanding to appreciate, nor the power to protect them; the only accomplishment in which she excelled was dancing. Joanna, as a last proof of her affection for Louis of Anjou, had left her crown to his brother and heir, René of Anjou; but after her death Alphonso of Arragon invaded Naples, wrested the crown from René and transmitted it to his own posterity. René retired to Provence and resided at Aix, his hereditary capital, cultivating poetry, painting, and music, and presiding over jousts and tournaments. This "bon Roi René," as he is called in the old histories, bore during his life the titles of the King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem, without possessing a foot of land in any of those countries. He was the father of Margaret of Anjou, the heroic wife of our Henry the Sixth.

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ISABELLA OF CASTILE.

SHOULD we seek through the pages of history for the portrait of a sovereign such as the Supreme Spirit of Good might indeed own for His vicegerent here on earth, where should we find one more blameless and beautiful than that of Isabella? or should we point out a reign distinguished by great events—events of such magnitude as to involve in their consequences not particular kings and nations, but the whole universe, and future ages to the end of time—where could we find such a reign as that of Isabella, who added a new world to her hereditary kingdom? or did we wish to prove that no virtues, talents, graces, though dignifying and adorning a double crown and a treble sceptre, nor the possession of a throne fixed in the hearts of her people, nor a long course of the most splendid prosperity, could exempt a great queen from the burthen of sorrow which is the lot of her sex and of humanity, where could we find an instance so forcible as in the history of Isabella?

This illustrious woman was the daughter of John the Second, King of Castile and Leon, and born in 1450, four years before the death of her father. King John, after a long, turbulent, and unhappy reign, died at Medina-del-Campo, leaving by his first wife, Maria of Arragon, a son, Don Henry, who succeeded him; and by his second wife, Isabella of Portugal, two children in their infancy, Alphonso and Isabella.

To account for the accession of Isabella to the throne of Castile,—an event which during the first years of her life seemed scarce within the verge of probability,—it is necessary to look back a little.

Spain, in the middle of the fifteenth century, was divided into four separate kingdoms, Castile, Arragon, Navarre, and the Moorish kingdom of Granada. The political institutions of Castile and Arragon were nearly alike, and though the form of government in both was monarchical, the spirit and principles were almost republican. The sovereign was merely the chief of his nobility; his power was circumscribed by that of the cortes, or parliament, composed of four distinct orders: the nobles of the first class, or *grandees*; the nobles of the second class; the representatives of towns and cities; and the deputies of the clergy. By the law, the cortes was to be convoked once in two years, and once assembled, could not be dissolved by the king without its own consent: all questions of peace and war, the collection of the revenues, the enacting and repealing of laws, and the redressing of all grievances in the state, depended on this assembly. When they pronounced the oath of allegiance to a new king, it was in these striking terms: "We, who are each of us as good as you, and who are altogether more powerful than you, promise obedience to your government, if you maintain our rights and liberties; but no otherwise." It was a fundamental article in the constitution, that if the king should violate their privileges, the people might legally disclaim him as their sovereign, and elect another in his place—though that other should be a *heathen*;—so ran the law.

This state of things had its disadvantages; the proud, warlike, turbulent barons stood between the king and the people; braved the former and oppressed the latter, and by their mutual factions, and frequent revolts against the throne, plunged the country into continual civil dissensions and sanguinary wars. The king held his power by so precarious a tenure, that he was constantly in arms to defend it, either abroad or at home: from the time when Pedro the Cruel and Henry of Transtamare contended for the crown in 1369, to the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, the history of Spain presents a confused picture of wars, popular insurrections, royal treasons, and domestic tragedies.

Yet, as in Italy, when the early Italian republics were contending within themselves and with each other, Spain,

thus divided, and under the most unsettled government, was flourishing and populous: less powerful, perhaps, as a nation, and less formidable to neighbouring states, than it afterwards became when consolidated into one vast empire under a despotic monarch; but inhabited by a brave, free, high-spirited, industrious people. Commerce and the arts, philosophy and the sciences, had flourished under the Moorish princes, and were extended to the Spaniards: they had a beautiful language and a rich poetical literature. "We have been accustomed," says Mr. Lockhart, in his excellent introduction to the Spanish Ballads, "to consider the modern Spaniards as the most bigoted, and enslaved, and ignorant of Europeans; but we must not forget that the Spaniards of three centuries back were in all respects a very different race of beings." They had then less bigotry, were possessed of more civil liberty, a more elegant literature, and more refinement of manners than any nation of Europe.

Henry the Fourth of Castile, the eldest brother of Isabella, was a weak and vicious prince: about ten years after his accession his misgovernment led to a general revolt, and the chief nobility, with Carillo, Archbishop of Toledo, at their head, resolved to exercise one of the undeniable privileges of their order, and degrade their unworthy monarch from his throne. They brought him to trial, and sentenced him, in effigy, in a manner the most extraordinary. On the 5th of June, 1405, a solemn assembly of the states was convened at Avila; an immense amphitheatre was constructed in a plain without the city; in the midst was placed an ill-carved wooden image, representing the king; it was seated on a throne, the diadem on its head, the sceptre in its hand, and the sword of justice girded to its side. In the midst of a solemn and breathless silence the articles of accusation and condemnation were read aloud: at the conclusion of the first article the Archbishop of Toledo advanced to the statue and lifted the royal crown from its head; upon reading the second article the Count of Placentia snatched away the sword of justice; at the third article the Count of Benaventé tore the sceptre from its hand; and at the close of the last article Don Diego de Zuniga hurled the image from the

throne, and, as it rolled in the dust, the whole assembly gave a shout of execration. The next moment the young Alphonso, brother to Henry, was raised to the vacant seat of power and proclaimed king; he was then about twelve years old. This sublime farce or pantomime, or whatever else it may be called, had not the effects that it was expected to produce. Henry raised a large army, and opposed his brother's party; but a negotiation was set on foot, and the Marquis of Villena, who was at the head of the malcontents, proposed, as one article of reconciliation, the marriage of Isabella with his brother Pachéco. The feeble Henry consented; but Isabella, then about fifteen, resisted a union which she deemed degrading to her rank. She had also a personal dislike of the man proposed to her, and who, in spite of her open repugnance, persisted in pressing this marriage. The king, urged by Villena, was on the point of forcing his sister to the altar, when the sudden death of Pachéco released her from this hated alliance; and during the next two or three years, while her brothers, Henry and Alphonso, were carrying on a furious civil war, she remained in retirement, quietly and unconsciously preparing herself to grace the crown for which they were contending. At length the young Alphonso, whose spirit, bravery, and opening talents offered the fairest promise of happiness to the people, died, at the age of fifteen; and the party of nobles opposed to Henry immediately resolved to place Isabella at their head. When their deputies waited on her with the offer of a crown, she replied, that "it was not theirs to bestow; and that while her elder brother Henry existed, nothing should induce her to assume a title which was his by the laws of God and man:" at the same time she claimed her right of succession and the title of Princess of Asturias, which belonged to her as heiress to the throne. The chiefs were astonished and disconcerted by a reply which left them without an excuse for revolt. Having in vain endeavoured to overcome her scruples, they concluded a treaty with Henry, the most humiliating certainly that ever was extorted from a father and a king. By this treaty he acknowledged his reputed daughter Joanna to be

illegitimate ; he consented to set aside her claims entirely, and declared Isabella his heiress and successor.

At such a price did this despicable monarch purchase for a few years longer the empty title of king, forfeiting, at the same time, all kingly attributes, as love, obedi  nce, honour, power ; being a husband, he had branded his own name with ignominy ; and being a father, had disgraced and disinherited his unoffending child.

The next important object of the malcontent party was to select, from among many aspirants, a fit consort for Isabella. The King of Portugal made overtures for himself ; Louis XI. asked her in marriage for his brother, the Duc de Guienne ; Edward IV. of England offered his brother, the Duke of Clarence, he who was afterwards drowned in a butt of malmsey ; and the King of Arragon asked her hand for his son Don Ferdinand. The latter was preferred by Isabella herself, as well as by all her party ; but as it was the interest of her brother Henry to throw every possible impediment in the way of such a marriage, the Archbishop of Toledo carried Isabella privately to Valladolid, where Ferdinand met her in disguise, and the articles being previously prepared, and on principles the most favourable to Isabella and her future kingdom, Ferdinand subscribed to them at once, and received from the Archbishop the hand of the young princess.

At the period of her marriage (in 1469) Isabella had just entered her twentieth year. In her person "she was well formed, of the middle size, with great dignity and gracefulness of deportment, and a mingled gravity and sweetness of demeanour. Her complexion was fair ; and her hair auburn, inclining to red ; her eyes were of a clear blue, with a benign expression ; and there was a singular modesty in her countenance, gracing, as it did, a wonderful firmness of purpose and earnestness of spirit." "She exceeded her husband in beauty, in personal dignity, in acuteness of genius, and grandeur of soul."* She combined a masculine energy and firmness of purpose with the utmost tenderness of heart, and a softness of temper and manner truly feminine. Her self-command was not allied to coldness, nor her prudence to dissimulation, and

* Life and Voyages of Columbus, vol. i. p. 105.

her generous and magnanimous spirit disdained all indirect measures, and all the little crooked arts of policy. While all her public thoughts and acts were princely and august, her private habits were simple, frugal, and unostentatious: without being learned, she was fond of literature, and being possessed of a fine understanding, had cultivated many branches of knowledge with success. She encouraged and patronised the arts, and was the soul of every undertaking which tended to promote the improvement and happiness of her subjects. Her only fault—most pardonable in her sex, her situation, and the age in which she lived—was that her piety tended to bigotry, and placed her too much at the disposal of her priestly advisers. This led her into some errors, sad to think of, and fraught with evil consequence to her people: they are a subject of regret; they cannot be a subject of reproach to this glorious creature, who, in an age of superstition and ignorance, was sometimes mistaken and misled, but never perverted.

Ferdinand, when he received the hand of Isabella, was a few months younger than his bride. "He was of the middle stature, well proportioned, hardy and active from athletic exercise; his carriage was free, erect, and majestic; he had an ample forehead, and hair of a bright chestnut colour; his eyes were clear; his complexion rather florid, but scorched to a manly brown by the toils of war; his mouth was handsome and gracious in its expression; his voice sharp; his speech quick and fluent."* His courage was cool and undaunted, not impetuous; his temper close and unyielding, and his demeanour grave; his ambition was boundless, but it was also selfish, grasping, and unchecked by any scruple of principle, any impulse of generosity; he had great vigour of mind and great promptitude in action, but he never knew what it was to be impelled by a disinterested motive; and even his excessive bigotry (which afterwards obtained for him and his successors the title of "Most Catholic") was still made subservient to his selfish views and his insatiate thirst for dominion. Yet however repulsive his character may appear to us who can contemplate at one glance the events of his long reign, and see his subtle, perfidious policy, dissected and laid bare by the severe

* Life and Voyages of Columbus.

pen of history, he did not appear thus in the eyes of Isabella when they met at Valladolid. He was in the bloom of youth; handsome, brave, accomplished, the vices of his character were yet undeveloped—his best qualities alone apparent. Animated by the wish to please, and, no doubt, pleased himself to find in the woman whom ambition had made his bride all the charms and excellences that could engage his attachment, we cannot wonder that Ferdinand at this time obtained and long fixed the tenderness and respect of his wife, whose disposition was in the highest degree confiding and affectionate.

Within a few days after the nuptial ceremony, Ferdinand and Isabella were obliged to separate; the prince retired from Valladolid as privately as he had entered it; and during the next two or three years it appears from the course of events that they met seldom and at long intervals.

When Henry found that this dreadful marriage had been solemnized without his knowledge or consent, he was struck at once with rage and terror; he revoked the treaty he had made in Isabella's favour, declared his daughter Joanna his only legal heir, and civil war again distracted and desolated the kingdom for more than three years. In 1474 Isabella proposed an interview with her brother; and they met at Segovia. She employed on this occasion all the eloquence, all the powers of persuasion she possessed as a woman, and all the ascendancy which her superior energy and spirit gave her over the feeble, vacillating mind of the king, to procure a reconciliation. When Henry appeared inclined to yield, and even went so far as to lead her palfrey as she rode through the streets of Segovia, Isabella sent for her husband, as if merely to pay his dutiful respects to his brother-in-law. They appeared in public together, entertained each other with seeming cordiality; and thus by her address Isabella led on her brother apparently to countenance those pretensions which he had himself denied. At the end of the same year the death of Henry opened a surer road to peace: he died of a fever in December 1474; his minister Villena had died a short time before; and Ferdinand and Isabella were immediately, and almost without opposition, proclaimed King and Queen of Castile.

The Archbishop of Toledo, who had been so instrumental

in placing Isabella on the throne, and the chief negotiator of her marriage, believed himself now at the summit of power, and expected everything from the gratitude or the weakness of the young queen : he was very much surprised to find that the Cardinal Mendoza had at least an equal share of influence and favour, and that Isabella was not of a character to leave the government in the hands of another. He was heard to say tauntingly, "that he would soon make Isabella lay down her sceptre and take up the distaff again ;" but it was not so easy ; and the ambitious archbishop, quitting the court in a fit of jealousy and disgust, threw himself into the party of Joanna, whose pretensions were supported by the young Marquis of Villena and other nobles. Alphonso, King of Portugal, also engaged in the cause of Joanna, upon condition that she should be contracted to him, although he was her uncle, (her mother's brother) and more than twice her age. He accordingly invaded Castile with a powerful army, and Joanna was proclaimed queen at Placentia. But Ferdinand, who possessed consummate skill as a general, engaged the Portuguese at Toro, defeated them, and obliged Alphonso to retire to his own kingdom ; the disaffected nobles submitted one after another to the power of Isabella, and Castile breathed at last from the horrors of civil war. As for the poor Princess Joanna, whose destiny it was to be disgraced and unfortunate through the vice of her parents, after being the affianced bride of several princes, who all one after another disclaimed her when she could no longer bring a crown for her dowry, she at last sought refuge in a convent, where she took the veil at the age of twenty, and died a nun.

Thus Isabella remained without a competitor, and was acknowledged as Queen of Castile and Leon ; and three years after the battle of Toro the death of his father raised Ferdinand to the throne of Arragon : the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon were henceforward united indissolubly, though still independent of each other. There arose at first some contest relative to the order of precedence : Castile and Leon had hitherto been allowed the precedence over Arragon in all political transactions ; but Ferdinand now insisted that, as king and husband, his titles should precede those of his wife.

It was a very delicate point of conjugal and state etiquette, and Isabella was placed in a difficult situation. She conducted herself, however, with that mixture of gentleness, prudence, and magnanimity which distinguished her character. She acknowledged, as a wife, the supremacy of Ferdinand, as her husband ; in public and private she yielded to him all the obedience, honour, and duty he could require, naming him on every occasion her lord, her master, her sovereign ; but she would not concede one iota of the dignity of her kingdom. She maintained that the Queen of Castile should never yield the precedence to the King of Arragon ; and in the end she overruled all opposition : it was decided that in all public acts, promulgated in their joint names, the titles of Castile and Leon should precede those of Arragon and Sicily. Isabella managed this delicate affair with a firmness which endeared her to her Castilian nobles, who were haughtily jealous of the honour of their country ; yet she upheld her rights with so much sweetness and feminine address, as to gain rather than lose in the affection of her husband ; while her influence in his councils, and the respect of his ministers, were evidently increased by the resolution she had shown in maintaining what was considered a point of national honour.

In the same year that the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon were united Queen Isabella lay in at Toledo, and gave birth to her second daughter, the Infanta Joanna, afterwards the mother of Charles the Fifth.

The first great event of the reign of the two sovereigns was the war of Granada. Hostility against the Moors seems to have been the hereditary appanage of the crown of Castile, and it was one of the principal articles in Isabella's marriage treaty, that Ferdinand should lead the armies of the queen against the Infidels as soon as the affairs of the kingdom allowed him to do so. Isabella has always been represented as a principal adviser and instigator of this sanguinary war, and during its continuance the animating soul of all the daring enterprises and deeds of arms achieved by others ;—and though the Spanish historians have added this to the rest of her merits, yet, disguise it as we will, there is something revolting to female nature in

the idea of a woman thus interested and engaged in carrying on a war, not defensive but offensive, and almost exterminating. We ought, therefore, in justice to Isabella, to look into the motives by which she was impelled ;—to consider the situation of the two countries at the time, the opinions and spirit of the age, and the deep-seated religious prejudices on both sides, which gave a tincture of fierce zeal to this great and terrible contest. It was bigotry on one side, opposed to fanaticism on the other. The Spaniards fought for honour, dominion, and the interests of the Church ; the Moors fought for their homes and hearths, their faith, their country, their very existence as a nation.

Isabella in undertaking this war (which had been in a measure transmitted to her with her crown) was certainly swayed by motives of which we can hardly estimate the full force, unless we transport ourselves in fancy back to the very times in which she lived. For seven hundred years the existence of a Moorish kingdom in the south of Spain had been like a thorn in the side of Christendom. Isabella deemed it a reproach that her frontiers should be endangered, her power defied, by a people occupying a slip of land between her kingdom and the sea ; and a sense of religion, sincere though pitiably mistaken, made her regard the conversion of the Moors as a necessary consequence of their subjection, and a war against them, even to extremity, as good and acceptable service to Heaven. On the other hand, the policy of Ferdinand in conducting this war, though cloaked under an appearance of religious zeal, was far more deep and selfish ;—with him it was not only the desire of extending his dominion and increasing his revenues, but, in accordance with a deep-laid plan, to aggrandize the crown at the expense of the power of the nobility and the liberties of the people ; a plan which he pursued through his whole reign with the most profound sagacity and the most unwearied perseverance ; and he well knew that a popular war, which should place an immense army at his disposal, and exhaust the resources and the ardent spirit of the nobles in the general service, would be an effectual step to the object he had in view.

The kingdom of Granada extended along the south of Spain for about one hundred and eighty miles, and between the mountains and the sea its breadth was about seventy miles ; yet this narrow space was filled with populous cities enriched by agriculture and commerce, defended by strong fortresses, and inhabited by a wealthy, warlike, industrious, and polished race of people. Nearly in the centre of the kingdom stood the royal city of Granada, on two lofty hills : the one crowned by the glorious palace of the Alhambra, within whose splendid courts forty thousand persons might have been lodged and entertained ; the other by the citadel of Alcazaba. The sides of these hills and the valley between them were occupied by houses and palaces to the number of seventy thousand, and Granada alone could send forth from her gates twenty thousand fighting men. Around this noble city stretched the Vega, or plain of Granada, which resembled one vast and beautiful garden in the highest state of cultivation : there flourished the citron and the orange, the pomegranate and the fig-tree ; there the olive poured forth its oil and the vine its purple juice. On one side a range of snowy mountains seemed to fence it from its hostile neighbours ; on the other the blue Mediterranean washed its shores, and poured into its harbours the treasures of Africa and the Levant. Nor were the inhabitants of this terrestrial Eden unmindful or unworthy of its glorious loveliness. They believed themselves peculiarly favoured by Heaven, in being placed in a spot of earth so enchanting, that they fancied the celestial Paradise must be suspended immediately over it, and could alone exceed it in delights. Their patriotism had in it something romantic and tender, like the passion of a lover for his mistress ; they clung to their beautiful country with a yearning affection ; they poured out their blood like water in its defence ; they celebrated its charms, and lamented its desolation, in those sweet and mournful ballads which are still extant, and which can yet draw tears from their Christian conquerors.

Long before the last invasion of Ferdinand and Isabella, the Moorish power had been on the decline : they had once possessed nearly the whole of the Peninsula from the Strait

of Gibraltar to the Pyrenees; but had, by degrees, been driven southwards by the Christian Powers, until they were circumscribed within the boundaries of Granada; even this they had held for some time as tributary to their enemies, paying annually two thousand pistoles of gold and sixteen hundred Christian captives, or Moorish slaves, to the sovereigns of Castile.

During the weak government of Henry the Fourth, and the civil wars which had distracted the kingdoms of Castile and Arragon, this tribute had fallen into disuse,—it had not been paid for several years: and while the Christian monarchs were weakened by internal and mutual warfare, the Moors had been increasing in wealth and power, and had even extended their dominions by the addition of several tracts and towns lying on their frontiers. The king, Muley Aben Hassan, was a tyrant in his family, and at this time distracted by domestic feuds; but he was a man of strong mind, with talents both for war and government; he had been distinguished in his youth for personal valour, and still retained in old age the fiery spirit and haughty bearing of his earlier years.—Such, in few words, was the state of the two nations when the war began.

The first step taken by Ferdinand and Isabella was to send a solemn embassy to the Moorish king, requiring the payment of the long arrears of tribute due to the monarchs of Castile. Aben Hassan received the ambassador in the state chamber of the Alhambra, and to the haughty requisition he replied as haughtily: “Tell your sovereigns that the kings of Granada who were used to pay tribute in money to the Castilian crown are dead. Our mint at present coins nothing but blades of cimeters and heads of lances.” The ambassador, Don Juan de Vera, probably longed to hurl back his proud defiance in the teeth of the Infidels; but it was then no time to answer it in the same spirit. The contest with Portugal was still pending—the claims of Isabella to her throne still undecided; it was not till 1481 that Ferdinand and Isabella, having signed a treaty with the King of Portugal, were enabled to turn their whole attention to the long meditated, long deferred war with Granada.

The Moorish king, aware of their intentions, and of the vast preparations making against him, was resolved to strike the first blow. He attacked Zahara, a celebrated fortress, perched on the summit of a mountain, and deemed so impregnable from its situation, as well as the strength of its defences, that a woman of severe and inaccessible chastity was proverbially called a Zaharena. In the dead of the night, Zahara was surprised by the Moors, the garrison massacred, and the rest of the inhabitants driven into captivity and sold as slaves. Although this inroad had only anticipated the intentions of Ferdinand and Isabella, and had given them a fair pretext for carrying the war into Granada, they affected the strongest indignation, and at their command all the chivalry of Castile flew to arms.

Among the nobles who first lifted their banners in this war, and afterwards became celebrated for their exploits, four were especially distinguished : Don Rodrigo Ponce de Leon, Marquis of Cadiz ; Don Alonzo de Aguilar (the elder brother of Gonzalvo de Cordova) ; the Count de Cabra ; and the Duke of Medina Sidonia. All these were in fact feudal sovereigns ; they were often engaged in petty wars with each other ; and there was not one of them who could not bring a small army of his own retainers into the field. The Marquis of Cadiz had immense possessions in Andalusia, including even populous cities and strong fortresses : his near neighbourhood to the Moors, and frequent and mutual inroads, had kept up a constant feeling of hostility and hatred between them. This nobleman was the first to avenge the capture of Zahara ; and his measures were taken with equal celerity and secrecy. He assembled his friends and followers, made a descent on the territories of the enemy, and took by storm the strong town of Alhama, situated within a few leagues of the Moorish capital.

When the news of the capture of Alhama was brought to Granada, it filled the whole city with consternation : the old men tore their garments, and scattered ashes on their heads ; the women rent their hair and ran about weeping and wailing ; with their children in their arms, they forced their way into the presence of the king, denouncing woe on his head for having thus brought down the horrors of war on their happy and beautiful country. "Accursed be the day," they exclaimed

- “when the flame of war was kindled by thee in our land! May the holy prophet bear witness before Allah, that we and our children are innocent of this act! Upon thy head, and upon the heads of thy posterity to the end of the world, rest the sin of the destruction of Zahara!”*

Aben Hassan, unmoved by these feminine lamentations, assembled his army in all haste, and flew to the relief of Alhama; he invested it with three thousand horse and fifty thousand foot, and Alhama would assuredly have been retaken by this overwhelming force but for the courage and magnanimity of a woman.

When news was brought to the Marchioness of Cadiz that her valiant husband was thus hard beset within the fortress of Alhama,—so that he must needs yield or perish, unless succour should be afforded him, and that speedily,—she sent immediately to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the most powerful of the neighbouring chiefs, requiring of him, as a Christian knight and a gentleman, to fly to the assistance of the marquis. Now, between the family of the duke and that of the Marquis of Cadiz there was an hereditary feud, which had lasted more than a century, and they were moreover personal enemies; yet, in that fine spirit of courtesy and generosity which mingled with the ferocity and ignorance of those times, the aid demanded with such magnanimous confidence by the high-hearted wife of De Leon, was as nobly and as frankly granted by the Duke of Medina Sidonia. Without a moment's hesitation he called together his followers and his friends; and such was his power and resources, that five thousand horse and fifty thousand foot assembled round his banner at Seville. With this numerous and splendid army he hastened to the relief of Alhama ere it should be overwhelmed by the enemy. In fact, the small but gallant band which still held its walls against the fierce attacks of the Moor were now reduced to the last extremity, and must in a few days have capitulated.

* The lament of the Moors on the loss of Alhama is perpetuated in the little Spanish ballad so happily and so faithfully translated by Lord Byron:

“The Moorish king rides up and down
Through Granada's royal town,” &c.

Ferdinand and Isabella were at Medina del Campo, when tidings successively arrived of the capture of Alhama, of the terrible situation of the Marquis of Cadiz, and the generous expedition of Medina Sidonia. The king, when he heard of his vast armament, and the glory to be acquired by the relief of Alhama, sent forward couriers to the duke with orders to await his coming, that he might himself take the command of the forces; and then, with a few attendants, he spurred towards the scene of action, leaving the queen to follow.

But the Duke of Medina Sidonia was not inclined to share with another—not even with his sovereign—the glory of an expedition undertaken from such motives and at his own care and cost; moreover, every hour of delay was of the utmost consequence, and threatened the safety of the besieged; instead, therefore, of attending to the commands of the king, or awaiting his arrival, the army of Medina Sidonia pressed forwards to Alhama. On the approach of the duke, Aben Hassan, who had already lost a vast number of his troops through the gallant defence of the besieged, saw that all farther efforts were in vain. Gnashing his teeth and tearing up his beard by the roots with choler and disappointment, he retired to his city of Granada. Meantime the Marquis of Cadiz and his brave and generous deliverer met and embraced before the walls of Alhama; the Duke of Medina Sidonia refused for himself and his followers any share in the rich spoils of the city; and from that time forth these noble cavaliers, laying aside their hereditary animosity, became firm and faithful friends.

These were the feats which distinguished the opening of the war: they have been extracted at some length, as illustrating the spirit and manners of the age, and the character of this memorable contest. The other events of the war, except as far as Isabella was personally concerned, must be passed over more rapidly. She had followed the king from Medina del Campo, and arrived at Cordova just as the council was deliberating what was to be done with the fortress of Alhama. Many were of opinion that it was better to demolish it at once, than to maintain it with so much danger and cost in the midst of the enemy's territory. "What!" exclaimed Isabella, indig-

nant that so much blood and valour should have been expended in vain, "what, then, shall we destroy the firstfruits of our victories? shall we abandon the first place we have wrested from the Moors? Never let us suffer such an idea to occupy our minds: it would give new courage to the enemy, arguing fear or feebleness in our councils. You talk of the toil and expense of maintaining Alhama; did we doubt on undertaking this war that it was to be a war of infinite cost, labour, and bloodshed? and shall we shrink from the cost the moment a victory is obtained, and the question is merely to guard or abandon its glorious trophy? Let us hear no more of the destruction of Alhama; let us maintain its walls sacred as a stronghold granted us by Heaven in the centre of this hostile land, and let our only consideration be how to extend our conquest and capture the surrounding cities."* This spirited advice was applauded by all: the city of Alhama was strongly garrisoned, and maintained thenceforward in despite of the Moors.

From this time we find Isabella present at every succeeding campaign, animating her husband and his generals by her courage and undaunted perseverance; providing for the support of the armies by her forethought and economy; comforting them under their reverses by her sweet and gracious speeches, and pious confidence in Heaven; and by her active humanity and her benevolent sympathy, extended to friend and foe, softening, as far as possible, the horrors and miseries of war. Isabella was the first who instituted regular military surgeons to attend the movements of the army, and be at hand on the field of battle. These surgeons were paid out of her own revenues. And she also provided six spacious tents, furnished with beds and all things requisite, for the sick and wounded, which were called the "Queen's Hospital."

Thus to the compassionate heart of a woman, directed by energy and judgment, the civilized world was first indebted for an expedient which has since saved so many lives, and done so much towards alleviating the most frightful evils of war.

It were long to tell of all the battles and encounters, the skirmishes and the forays, the fierce mutual inroads for massacre

* Chronicle of the Conquest of Granada, vol. i. p. 81.

or plunder, which took place before the Crescent was finally plucked down, and the Cross reared in its stead ; or to describe the valorous sieges and obstinate defences of the fortresses of Ronda, Zalea, Moclin, and Baza ; nor how often the banks of the Xenil were stained with blood, while down its silver current

“ Chiefs confused in mutual slaughter,
Moor and Christian, rolled along !”

The Castilian sovereigns, great as were their power and resources, had to endure some signal reverses ; the most memorable of which were the disgraceful repulse of Ferdinand before the walls of Loxa in 1482 and the terrible defeat of the Christians in the passes of the mountains of Malaga, which occurred in 1483. On that disastrous day, which is still remembered in the songs of Andalusia, three of the most celebrated commanders of Castile, with the pride of her chivalry, were encountered by a determined band of Moorish peasantry : all the brothers of the Marquis of Cadiz perished at his side ; the Master of Santiago fled ; the royal standard-bearer was taken prisoner ; and the Marquis of Cadiz, and his friend Don Alonzo de Aguilar, escaped with difficulty, and wounded almost to death. In truth, the Moors made a glorious stand for their national honour and independence ; and had it not been for their own internal divisions and distracted councils, which gave them over a prey to their conquerors, their subjection, which cost such a lavish expenditure of blood, and toil, and treasure, had been more dearly purchased ; perhaps the issue had been altogether different.

The feuds between the Zegris and the Abencerrages, and the domestic cruelties of Aben Hassan, had rendered Granada a scene of tumult and horror, and stained the halls of the Alhambra with blood. Boabdil, the eldest son of Aben Hassan, (called by the Spanish historians “*el Re Chiquito*,” or “*el Chico*,” the little king,) had rebelled against his father, or rather had been forced into rebellion by the tyranny of the latter : the old monarch was driven from the city of Granada, and took up his residence at Malaga, while Boabdil reigned in the Alhambra. The character of Boabdil was the reverse of that of his ferocious

sire ; he was personally brave, generous, magnificent, and humane, but indolent, vacillating in temper, and strongly and fatally influenced by an old tradition or prophecy, which foretold that he would be the last king of his race, and that he was destined to witness the destruction of the Moorish power in Spain. Roused, however, by the remonstrances of his heroic mother, the Sultana Ayxa, Boabdil resolved to signalize his reign by some daring exploit against the Christians. He assembled a gallant army, and led them to invade the Castilian territory. In the plains of Lucena he was met by the Count de Cabra, who, after a long-contested and sanguinary battle, defeated and dispersed his troops. Boabdil himself, distinguished above the rest not less by his daring valour than by his golden armour and his turban that blazed with jewels, was taken prisoner, and carried by the Count de Cabra to his castle of Vaena.

The mother of Boabdil, the Sultana Ayxa, and his young and beautiful wife Moyrama, had daily watched from the loftiest tower of the Alhambra to see his banners returning in triumph through the gate of Elvira ; a few cavaliers, fugitives from the battle of Lucena, and covered with dust and blood, came spurring across the Vega, with the news of his defeat and capture—and who can speak the sorrow of the wife and the mother ? Isabella herself, when the tidings of this great victory were brought to her, wept in the midst of her exultation for the fate of the Moorish prince. She sent him a message full of courtesy and kindness, and when the council met to consider whether it would be advisable to deliver Boabdil into the hands of his cruel father, who had offered large terms to get him into his power, Isabella rejected such barbarous policy with horror. By her advice and influence Boabdil was liberated and restored to his kingdom, on conditions which, considering all the circumstances, might be accounted favourable : it was stipulated that he should acknowledge himself the vassal of the Castilian crown, pay an annual tribute, and release from slavery four hundred Christian captives, who had long languished in chains, and that he should leave his only son and the sons of several nobles of his family as hostages for his faith. Having subscribed to these conditions, Boabdil was received by Ferdinand and

Isabella at Cordova, embraced as a friend, and restored to his kingdom with gifts and princely honours.

In liberating Boabdil the politic Ferdinand was impelled by motives far different from those which actuated his generous queen. He wisely calculated that the release of the Moorish prince would prove far more advantageous than his detention, by prolonging the civil discords of the kingdom of Granada, and dividing its forces. The event showed he had not been mistaken. No sooner was Boabdil restored to freedom, than the wrath of the fiery old king, Aben Hassan, again turned upon his son, and the most furious contest raged between the two parties.

This was the miserable and distracted state of Granada, while King Ferdinand continued to push his conquests, taking first one city or castle, then another ; ravaging the luxuriant Vega, and carrying away the inhabitants into captivity : while Boabdil, bound by the treaty into which he had entered, wept to behold his beautiful country desolated with fire and sword, and dared not raise his arm to defend it. In the midst of these troubles, old Aben Hassan becoming blind and infirm, was deposed by his brother Abdalla el Zagal, who proclaimed himself king ; and denouncing his nephew Boabdil as an ally of the Christians and a traitor to his faith and country, he prepared to carry on the war with vigour. The military skill of El Zagal was equal to his ferocity, and the Christians found in him a determined and formidable opponent.

The fortress of Ronda, in the Serrania, which had long been considered impregnable from its strength and situation, was taken from the Moors in 1485, after a long and fierce resistance. The isolated rock on which this stronghold was perched, like the eyry of the vulture, was hollowed into dungeons, deep and dark, in which were a vast number of Christian captives, who had been taken in the Moorish forays. It is recorded that among them were several young men of high rank, who had surrendered themselves as slaves in lieu of their parents, not being able to pay the ransom demanded ; and many had pined for years in these receptacles of misery. Being released from their fetters, they were all collected together, and sent to the queen at Cordova. When Isabella beheld them, she melted into tears : she ordered them to be provided with clothes and money, and

all other necessities, and conveyed to their respective homes ; while the chains they had worn were solemnly suspended in the church of St. John at Toledo, in sign of thanksgiving to Heaven. This was the spirit in which Isabella triumphed in success : an instance of the gentle and magnanimous temper with which she could sustain a reverse occurred soon afterwards.

A short time after the siege of Ronda Isabella took up her residence at Vaena, a strong castle on the frontiers of Andalusia, belonging to the renowned and valiant Count de Cabra, the same who had won the battle of Lucena, and taken Boabdil prisoner. The influence which Isabella exercised over her warlike nobles was not merely that of a queen, but that of a beautiful and virtuous woman, whose praise was honour, and whose smiles were cheaply purchased by their blood. The Count de Cabra, while he entertained his royal and adored mistress within his castle walls, burned to distinguish himself by some doughty deed of arms, which should win him grace and favour in her eyes. The Moor El Zagal was encamped near Moclin. To capture another king, to bring him in chains to the feet of his mistress—what a glorious exploit for a Christian knight and a devoted cavalier ! The ardent count beheld only the hoped success ; he overlooked the dangers of the undertaking. With a handful of followers he attacked the fierce El Zagal ; was defeated, and himself and his retainers driven back upon Vaena, with “rout and confusion following at their heels.”

Isabella waited the issue of this expedition within the walls of the castle. She was seated in the balcony of a lofty tower, overlooking the vale beneath, and at her side were her daughter Isabella and her infant son Don Juan. Her chief minister and counsellor, the venerable Cardinal Mendoza, stood near her. They looked along the mountain road which led towards Moclin, and beheld couriers spurring their steeds through the defiles with furious haste, and galloping into the town ; and in the same moment the shrieks and wailings which rose from below informed Isabella of the nature of their tidings ere they were summoned to her presence. For a moment her tenderness of heart prevailed over her courage and fortitude ; the loss of so many devoted friends, the defeat

of one of her bravest knights, the advantage and triumph gained by the enemy almost in her presence, and the heart-rending lamentations of those who had lost sons, brothers, lovers, husbands in this disastrous battle, almost overwhelmed her. But when some of the courtiers present endeavoured to comfort her by laying the blame on the rashness of De Cabra, and would have lessened him in her opinion, she was roused to generous indignation. "The enterprise," she said, "was rash, but not more rash than that of Lucena, which had been crowned with success, and which all had applauded as the height of heroism. Had the Count de Cabra succeeded in capturing the uncle, as he did the nephew, who would not have praised him to the skies?"

The successful enterprise of the Christians against Zalea concluded the eventful campaign of 1485. Isabella retired from the seat of war to Alcada de Henares, where, in the month of December, she gave birth to a third daughter, the Infanta Catherine of Arragon, afterwards the wife of Henry the Eighth of England.

The next year, 1486, was one of the most memorable during the war. Early in the spring Isabella and her husband repaired to Cordova, and a gallant and splendid array of the feudal chieftains of Castile assembled round them. That ancient city, with all the fair valley along the banks of the Guadalquivir, resounded with warlike preparations; the waving of banners, the glancing of spears, the flashing of armour, the braying of trumpets, the neighing of steeds, the gorgeous accoutrements of the knights and their retainers, must have formed a moving scene of surpassing interest and magnificence. There was the brave Marquis of Cadiz, justly the mirror of Andalusian chivalry. When the women who were obliged to attend Queen Isabella to the wars, and who possessed not her noble contempt of danger, beheld the Marquis of Cadiz, they rejoiced, and felt secure under the protection of one so renowned for his courtesy to their sex, and of whom it was said that no injured woman had ever applied to him in vain for redress. There was the valiant Count de Cabra, who had captured Boabdil; and the famous Don Alonzo de Aguilar, renowned for his deeds of arms in history and in song; and

there was his brother Gonsalvo de Cordova, then captain of Isabella's guards. There was the young Duke del Infantado, with his five hundred followers, all glittering in silken vests and scarfs and armour inlaid with silver and gold; and the Duke of Medina Sidonia, and the Duke of Medina Celi, names at once so harmonious in their sound, and so chivalrous in their associations, that they dwell upon the ear like the prolonged note of a silver clarion. Besides these were many worthy cavaliers of England, France, and Germany, who were induced partly by the fame of this holy expedition (such as it was deemed), partly by the wish to distinguish themselves in the sight of a beautiful and gracious queen, to join the banners of Isabella and Ferdinand at Cordova. The most conspicuous of these foreign auxiliaries was Lord Rivers of England, a near relation of Elizabeth of York, and the son of that accomplished Lord Rivers who was beheaded at Pomfret. After the battle of Bosworth-field he joined the camp of the Catholic sovereigns with three hundred retainers, and astonished the Spaniards by the magnificence of his appointments, his courtesy, his valour, and the ponderous strength and determined courage of his men. There was also the accomplished French knight, Gaston de Léon of Toulouse, with a band of followers all gallant and gay, "all plumed like ostriches that wing the wind," and ready alike for the dance or the melee, for lady's bower or battle-field;—and many more.

The presence of Isabella and her court lent to this martial pomp an added grace, dignity, and interest; she was surrounded by many ladies of noble birth and distinguished beauty, the wives or mothers or sisters of the brave men who were engaged in the war. The most remarkable were, the Infanta Isabella, at this time about fourteen, and who, as she grew in years, became the inseparable companion and bosom friend of her mother; the high-minded Marchioness of Cadiz, and the Marchioness of Moya, both honoured by the queen's intimacy, and the latter eminent for her talents as well as her virtues. A number of ecclesiastics of high rank and influence also attended on Isabella. The grand Cardinal, Gonzalez de Mendoza, was always at her side, and was at this time and during his life her chief minister and adviser; he is

described as "a man of a clear understanding, eloquent, judicious, and of great quickness and capacity in business, simple yet nice in his apparel, lofty and venerable in his deportment." He was an elegant scholar, but of course imbued with all the prejudices of his age and calling, and, notwithstanding his clerical profession, he had a noble band of warriors in his pay. There were also the Pope's Nuncio, the Prior of Prado, the warlike Bishop of Jaen, and many others.

Amid this assemblage of haughty nobles and fierce soldiers, men who knew no arts but those of war, and courted no glory which was not sown and reaped in blood,—amid all these high-born dames and proud and stately prelates,—moved one in lowly garb and peaceful guise, overlooked, unheeded, when not repulsed with scorn by the great, or abandoned to the derision of the vulgar, yet bearing on his serene brow the stamp of greatness;—one before whose enduring and universal fame the transient glory of these fighting warriors faded away, like tapers in the blaze of a noontide sun; and compared with whose sublime achievements their loftiest deeds were mere infants' play: this was the man

"Heaven design'd

To lift the veil that cover'd half mankind"—

Columbus! He first appeared as a suitor in the court of Castile in the spring of the year 1486. In the midst of the hurry and tumult of martial preparation, and all the vicissitudes and pressing exigencies of a tremendous and expensive war, we can hardly wonder if his magnificent but (as they then appeared) extravagant speculations should at first meet with little attention or encouragement. During the spring and autumn of this year he remained at Cordova, but, though warmly patronised by the Cardinal Mendoza, he could not obtain an audience of the sovereigns.

Nor was Isabella to blame in this: it appears that while Ferdinand proceeded to lay siege to Loxa, the queen was wholly engrossed by the care of supplying the armies, the administration of the revenues, and all the multiplied anxieties of foreign and domestic government which in the absence of Ferdinand devolved solely upon her. She gave her atten-

tion unremittingly to these complicated affairs, sparing neither time nor fatigue ; and conducted all things with consummate judgment, as well as the most astonishing order and activity. It is not surprising that under such circumstances Columbus, then an obscure individual, should have found it difficult to obtain an audience ; or that his splendid views, as yet unrealized, should have appeared, amid the immediate cares and interests and dangers pressing around her, somewhat remote and visionary, and should have failed to seize on her instant attention.

In the meantime the war proceeded ; Loxa was taken after an obstinate defence and a terrible slaughter of the miserable inhabitants. Boabdil, "the Unlucky," was retaken at Loxa, but released again on renewing his oath of vassalage, to foment the troubles of his wretched country.*

After the capture of Loxa Ferdinand wrote to Isabella, requesting her presence in his camp, that he might consult with her on the treatment of Boabdil, and the administration of their new dominions.

In ready obedience to her husband's wish, Isabella took her departure from the city of Cordova on the 12th of June. She was accompanied by her favourite daughter the Princess Isabella, and a numerous train of noble ladies and valiant cavaliers, with courtiers, statesmen, and prelates of rank. On the frontiers of Granada she was met by the Marquis of Cadiz, who, with a gallant company of knights and retainers, had come to escort her through the lately-conquered territories to the camp, which was now removed to Moclin, another formidable place of strength, which Ferdinand had invested with his whole army. On her journey thither Isabella made a short

* In one of the suburbs of Loxa a poor weaver was at his work during the hottest of the assault. His wife urged him to fly. "Why should I fly?" said the Moor, "to be rescued for hunger and slavery? I tell you, wife, I will abide here ; for better is it to die quickly by the steel than to perish piecemeal in chains and dungeons." Having said this he coolly resumed his work, and was slain at his loom by the furious assailants. *Vide* Conquest of Granada.—This reminds us of Archimedes : only that the Moorish weaver was the greater philosopher of the two, and did not stick to his loom through mere absence of mind.

stay at Loxa, where she and the young Infanta visited the sick and wounded soldiers, distributing among them money and raiment and medical aid, according to their need. Thence Isabella proceeded through the mountain roads towards Moclin, still respectfully escorted by the brave Marquis of Cadiz, who attended at her bridle-rein, and was treated by her with all the distinction due to so valiant and courteous a knight. When she approached the camp, the young Duke del Infantado, with all his retainers in their usual gorgeous array, met her at the distance of several miles ; and when they came in view of the tents, the king rode forth to receive her, at the head of the grandees, and attended by all the chivalry of his army, glittering in their coats of mail and embroidered vests, with waving plumes, and standards and pennons floating in the summer air. "The queen," says the Chronicle, "was mounted on a chestnut mule, in a saddle-chair of state ; the housings were of fine crimson cloth embroidered with gold ; the reins and head-piece were of satin, curiously wrought with needle-work. The queen wore a skirt of velvet over petticoats of brocade ; a scarlet mantle hung from her shoulders, and her hat was of black velvet embroidered with gold." The dress of the young Infanta was all of black, and a black mantilla, ornamented in the Moorish fashion, hung on her shoulders. The ladies of the court, all richly dressed, followed on forty mules. The meeting between Ferdinand and Isabella, on this occasion, was arranged with true Spanish gravity and etiquette. Laying their conjugal character aside for the present, they approached each other as sovereigns ; each alighting at some paces distance, made three profound reverences before they embraced. The queen, it is remarked, took off her embroidered hat, and remained with her head uncovered, except by a silken net which confined her hair. Ferdinand then kissed her respectfully on the cheek, and, turning to his daughter, he took her in his arms, gave her a father's blessing, and kissed her on the lips. They then remounted, and the splendid procession moved onwards to the camp, the Earl of Rivers riding next to the king and queen.

Isabella and her daughter were present during the whole of the siege of Moclin, which was reduced with great difficulty,

and principally through the skill of the Lombard engineers. It appears that in the use of all fire-arms the Spaniards greatly excelled the Moors ; and in the sciences of fortification and gunnery, which were still in their infancy, the Italians at this time exceeded all Europe. Moclin fell before the Spanish batteries, and the inhabitants capitulated ; and Isabella and her husband entered the city in solemn state with their band of warriors. They were preceded by the standard of the Cross, and a company of priests, with the choir of the royal chapel, chaunting the *Te Deum*. As they moved thus in solemn procession through the smoking and deserted streets of the fallen city, they suddenly heard a number of voices, as if from under the earth, responding to the chorus of priests, and singing aloud, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." There was a pause of astonishment, and it was discovered that these were the voices of certain Christian captives who had been confined in the subterraneous dungeons of the fortress. Isabella, overcome with a variety of emotions, wept, and commanded that these captives should be instantly brought before her. She then ordered them to be clothed and comforted, and conveyed to their several homes.

The queen remained for some weeks at Moclin, healing, as far as she was able, the calamities of war ; introducing regular government and good order into her new dominions ; converting mosques into churches and convents, and founding colleges for the instruction and conversion of the Moors. It should not be omitted, that with all her zeal for religion Isabella uniformly opposed herself to all measures of persecution or severity : the oppression and cruelty afterwards exercised towards the conquered Moors did not originate with her, but, on the contrary, were most abhorrent to her benign temper and her natural sense of justice. She was ever their advocate and protectress, even while she lent all the energies of her mind to the prosecution of the national and religious war she waged against them. Hence she was hardly more beloved and revered by her Catholic than by her Moslem subjects.

Ferdinand, meantime, marched forward and ravaged the Vega, even to the very gates of Granada. He then returned to

join the queen at Moclin ; and, at the conclusion of this triumphant campaign, the two sovereigns retired to the city of Cordova, leaving young Frederick de Toledo (already distinguished for his military talents, and afterwards the Duke of Alva of terrible memory,) to command upon the frontiers of their new conquests.

From Cordova Isabella removed to Salamanca, where the plans and proposals of Columbus were for the first time laid before a council appointed to consider them. When we read in history of the absurd reasoning and narrow-minded objections, the superstitious scruples, which grave statesmen and learned doctors opposed to the philosophical arguments and enthusiastic eloquence of Columbus, we cannot wonder that Isabella herself should doubt and hesitate. Her venerable minister, the Cardinal Mendoza, favoured Columbus, but her confessor, Fernando de Talavera, was decidedly inimical to all plans of discovery, and by his private influence over the queen, he was enabled to throw a thousand impediments in the way of the great navigator, and defer his access to Isabella.

The winter passed away before the council at Salamanca came to any decision. Early in the spring of 1487 King Ferdinand took the field, with 20,000 cavalry and 50,000 foot ; while Isabella remained at Cordova to preside, as usual, over the affairs of government, and make arrangements for conveying to this vast army the necessary and regular supplies. It was the design of Ferdinand to attack Malaga, the principal seaport of Granada, and the second city of the kingdom, and thus cut off any succours that might be expected from the Mahometan states of Africa. It was necessary to reduce several strong places before the army could invest the city of Malaga, and, among others, Velez Malaga. Before this last-mentioned town the king exhibited a trait of personal valour which had nearly proved fatal to him. The camp being endangered by a sudden attack of the Moors, he rushed into the battle, armed only with his lance ; his equerry was slain by his side, and Ferdinand instantly transfixed with his spear the Moor who had killed his attendant. He was thus left without a weapon, surrounded by the enemy, and had not the Marquis of Cadiz and others of his nobles galloped to

his rescue, he must have perished. On his return to the camp in safety he made a vow to the Virgin never again to enter the battle without his sword girded to his side.

When Isabella was informed of this incident, she was greatly agitated; the gallantry and danger of her husband appear to have left a strong impression on her imagination, for long afterwards she granted to the inhabitants of Velez Malaga, as the arms of their city, an escutcheon representing the figure of the king on horseback, with the equerry dead at his feet, and the Moors flying before him.

In the beginning of May Ferdinand undertook the memorable siege of Malaga, which lasted more than three months. The city was strongly fortified, and, contrary to the wishes of the opulent and peaceful merchants, was most obstinately defended by Hamet el Zegri, a valiant old Moor, who had the command of the garrison. To him the horrible sufferings inflicted on the inhabitants by a protracted siege appeared quite unworthy the consideration of a soldier, whose duty it was to defend the fortress entrusted to him. The difficulties, dangers, and delays which attended this siege so dispirited the Spaniards, that many thought of abandoning it altogether. A report that such was the intention of the sovereigns was circulated among the Christians and the Moors, and gave fresh courage to the latter. To disprove it in the sight of both nations, Queen Isabella, attended by her daughter and the whole retinue of her court, arrived to take up her residence in the camp.

Isabella was received by her army with shouts of exultation. Immediately on her arrival, she gave a proof of the benignity of her disposition, by entreating that the attacks on the city might be discontinued, and offers of peace sent in her name to the besieged: the firing accordingly ceased for that day. And gladly would the inhabitants of Malaga have accepted her overtures; but the fierce Hamet el Zegri disdainfully rejected them, and even threatened with death the first person who should propose to capitulate.

The Marquis of Cadiz invited the queen and the Infanta to a banquet in his tent, which crowned with its floating banners and silken draperies the summit of a lofty hill

opposite to the citadel of Malaga. While he was pointing out to Isabella the various arrangements of the royal camp, which filled with warlike tumult the valley at their feet, while he was explaining the operations of the siege, the strong defences of the city, and the effects of the tremendous ordnance, he suddenly beheld from one of the enemy's towers his own family banner hung out in scorn and defiance; it was the same which had been captured by the Moors, in the terrible defeat among the mountains, in 1483. Whatever the marquis might have felt at this insult offered to him in the presence of his queen and the noblest ladies of her court, he suppressed his indignation; while his kinsmen and followers breathed deep vows of revenge, he alone maintained a grave silence, and seemed unmindful of the insolent taunt; but within a few days afterwards the tower from which his banner had been displayed in mockery lay a heap of ruins.

While Isabella remained in the camp before Malaga, her life, which her virtues had rendered dear and valuable to her people, had nearly been brought to a tragical close. A Moorish fanatic, named Agerbi, who had among his own people the reputation of a Santon, or holy prophet, undertook to deliver his country from its enemies. He found means to introduce himself into the Christian camp, where his wild and mysterious appearance excited equal astonishment and curiosity: he pretended to the gift of prophecy, and required to be conducted to the king and queen, to whom he promised to reveal the event of the seige, and other secrets of importance. By command of the Marquis of Cadiz, he was conducted to the royal tents. It happened, fortunately, that the king was then asleep; the queen, though impatient and curious to behold this extraordinary prophet, of whom her attendants had made such a wonderful report, yet, with her usual delicacy towards her husband, refused to receive the Moor, or listen to his communications, until the king should wake: he was therefore conducted into a tent in which the Marchioness of Moya and Don Alvaro of Portugal were playing at chess; a few attendants were standing round. From the dress and high bearing of these personages, and the magnificent decorations of the pavilion, the Moorish Santon believed himself in

the presence of the king and queen, and, while they were gazing on him with wonder and curiosity, he drew a cimeter from beneath his robe, struck Don Alvaro to the earth, and, turning to the marchioness, aimed a blow at her head, which had been fatal, if the point of his weapon had not caught in the hangings of the tent, and thus arrested its force, so that it lighted harmless on the golden ornaments in her hair. This passed like lightning: in the next moment the assassin was flung to the earth by a friar and the queen's treasurer, and instantly massacred by the guards, who rushed in upon hearing the deadly struggle. The soldiers, in a paroxysm of indignation, seized on his body, and threw it into the city from one of their military engines. Don Alvaro recovered from his wound, and an additional guard, composed of twelve hundred cavaliers of rank, was stationed round the royal tents. Isabella, though struck at first with consternation and horror at this treacherous attempt on her life, was still anxious to spare the miserable inhabitants of Malaga. By her advice terms of capitulation were again offered to the city, but in vain: Hamet el Zegri, encouraged by a certain Moorish necromancer, whom he entertained in his household, and who fed him with false hopes and predictions, again rejected her overtures with contempt.

It appears, that among those who joined the court of Isabella before Malaga was Columbus, whose expenses on this occasion were defrayed from the royal treasury.* But amid the clash and din of arms, and the dangers and anxieties of the siege, the murderous sallies and fierce assaults, only relieved now and then by solemn religious festivals, or by the princely banquets given by the various commanders at their respective quarters, there was no time to bestow on the consideration of plans for the discovery of distant worlds: the issue of a long and terrible war hung upon the event of an hour, and the present crisis engrossed the thoughts of all.

In the meantime the siege continued; famine raged within the city, and the people, seized with despair, were no longer restrained by the threats or the power of Hamet el Zegri: they pursued him with curses and lamentations as he rode

* *Vide* Life and Voyages of Columbus.

through the streets; mothers threw down their starving infants before his horses: "Better," they exclaimed, "that thou shouldst trample them to death at once, than that we should behold them perish by inches, and listen to their famished cries." Hamet, unable to stay the tide of popular fury, withdrew into the fortress of the citadel, called the Gibralfaro, and abandoned the town and its inhabitants to their fate; they immediately surrendered at discretion, and were forced to ransom themselves from slavery on hard and cruel terms, which very few were able to fulfil. The fortress yielded soon afterwards; Hamet el Zegri was thrown into a dungeon, and the garrison sold into slavery. Sixteen hundred Christian captives were found in the city of Malaga; they were sent to Queen Isabella, as the most acceptable trophy of her success: and yet the same Isabella who received these poor people with compassionate tenderness,—who took off their fetters with her own hands, relieved their wants, and restored them to their families and homes,—the same Isabella sent fifty beautiful Moorish girls as a present to the Queen of Naples; thirty to the Queen of Portugal; and others she reserved for herself and for the favourite ladies of her household. It also appears that, eventually, all the inhabitants of Malaga, with few exceptions, to the number of sixteen thousand men, women, and children, were stripped of their possessions, by the heartless policy of Ferdinand, and condemned to slavery. We may infer from the general conduct and character of Isabella that she either could not prevent this cruel retaliation, or was impressed by her religious directors with the idea that it was right and just. As for the measures afterwards taken for the conversion of this unhappy people, she was uniformly opposed to them. She long resisted the establishment of the Inquisition; but, as the historian of Columbus observes, "her scruples, unfortunately for Spain, were slowly vanquished by the churchmen about her." When that execrable tribunal commenced its persecutions against the Moorish and Jewish converts, her merciful interposition frequently checked its cruelties, and exposed her to the censure of the priesthood. When, contrary to her own sweet nature and upright judgment, she yielded to those in whose wisdom she confided, she erred

in her humility and her ignorance ; and the effort, the sacrifice it cost her gentle disposition, converted her error almost into a virtue. The sin and the shame rest upon those who, from interested motives, or in perverse blindness, deceived and misled her ! It was far different with her *Most Catholic* husband, who made his bigotry the excuse for his ambition, and his persecuting zeal the cloak of his detestable rapacity.

In the following year (1488) Ferdinand led his army to attack the Moors on the eastern side of Granada: this campaign was short, and by no means successful, owing to the military prowess of El Zagal, who ruled in these provinces. Isabella spent the ensuing winter at Saragoza and Valladolid, occupied in the domestic affairs of her kingdom, and in the education of her children. Voltaire asserts, that Isabella and her husband "neither loved nor hated each other, and that they lived together less as husband and wife, than as allies and independent sovereigns;" but, on a closer examination of their history, this does not appear to be true. Isabella's marriage had been a union of inclination as well as of policy. In her youth she had both loved and admired her husband ; as his cold and selfish character disclosed itself, she may possibly have felt her esteem and affection decline ; and it is remarked by Voltaire himself, that she deeply suffered as a woman and a wife, not only from her husband's coldness, but from his frequent infidelities. Yet, if they had private disagreements, they were never betrayed to the prying eyes of the courtiers ; in this respect she maintained her own dignity and his with admirable self-command. She found consolation for her domestic sorrows in the society of her eldest daughter, the Infanta Isabella, and in the excellent qualities of her son, Don Juan. Her second daughter, Joanna, had been from her infancy subject to fits, which, in the course of years, disordered her intellect ; her youngest daughter, Catherine, who has obtained a mournful celebrity in history as Catherine of Arragon, was about this time demanded in marriage by Henry VII. of England, for his son Prince Arthur. This infant marriage sealed a commercial and political treaty between the two countries, which remained unbroken till the time of Philip II. and Queen Elizabeth.

The year 1489 was rendered memorable by the siege of Baza, a fortress situated on the eastern confines of Granada. On the reduction of this place depended the event of the war, and the king invested it with an army of twenty-five thousand men. While he was before the place, displaying military skill, and leading on his gallant chivalry, a far more difficult task devolved on Queen Isabella ; she had to attend to the affairs of government, and at the same time to provide all things for supplying a large army, enclosed in the enemy's country, and to which there was no access but over difficult mountain roads and dangerous passes : the incredible expenses and difficulties she met and overcame, and the expedients to which she had recourse, give us the most extraordinary idea of her talents, her activity, and her masculine energy of mind. The undertaking was in fact so hazardous, that those who usually contracted for the supply of the army now refused to do it on any terms ; Isabella was therefore left to her own resources : she constructed roads through the rugged mountainous frontier for the conveyance of the convoys ; she hired fourteen thousand mules, which were incessantly employed in the transport of grain and other necessaries. To supply the almost incredible expense, she had not recourse to any oppressive measures of taxation ; many prelates and convents opened to her their treasures ; she pledged her own plate ; and it is related that many wealthy individuals readily lent her large sums of money, on no other security than her word : such was the character she bore among her subjects, such their confidence in her faith and truth. "And thus," says the Chronicle, "through the wonderful activity, judgment, and enterprise of this heroic and magnanimous woman, a great host encamped in the heart of a warlike country, accessible only over mountain roads, was maintained in continual abundance ;" and to her the ultimate success of the undertaking may be attributed. After the siege had lasted nearly seven months, at an immense cost of treasure and waste of life, Isabella came with her daughter, and all her retinue, and took up her residence in the camp. When from the towers of Baza the Moors beheld the queen and all her splendid train emerging from the defiles, and descending the mountain roads in a long and gorgeous array, they beat their

breasts and exclaimed, "Now is the fate of Baza decided!" Yet such was the admiration and reverence which this extraordinary woman commanded even among her enemies, that not a gun was fired, not a shot discharged, nor the slightest interruption offered to her progress. On her arrival there was at once a cessation of all hostilities, as if by mutual though tacit consent; and shortly after Baza surrendered on honourable terms. The chief of the Moorish garrison, Prince Cadi Yahee, was so captivated by the winning grace and courtesy with which Isabella received him, that he vowed never more to draw his sword against her; the queen accepted him as her knight, and replied to his animated expressions of devotion with much sweetness, saying, "that now he was no longer opposed to her, she considered the war of Granada as already terminated."

Baza surrendered in December, 1489, and was soon followed by the submission of the haughty Moor, El Zagal, who, driven from place to place, and unable any longer to contend against the Christian forces, yielded up that part of the kingdom of Granada which yet acknowledged him as sovereign, and did homage to Ferdinand and Isabella as their vassal.

King Boabdil yet ruled in Granada, and the treaty of friendship between him and the Catholic king had been duly observed as long as it suited the policy of Ferdinand; but no sooner had El Zagal surrendered, than Boabdil was called upon to yield up his capital, and receive in lieu of it the revenues of certain Moorish towns. Boabdil might possibly have accepted these terms, but the citizens of Granada, and the warriors who had assembled within it, rose up against him, and under the command of Muza, a noble and valiant Moor, they returned a haughty defiance to Ferdinand, declaring that they would perish beneath the walls of their glorious city, ere they would surrender this seat of Moorish power into the hands of unbelievers. Ferdinand and Isabella deferred for a time the completion of their conquest, and retired after this campaign to the city of Seville. In the spring of 1490 the Infanta Isabella was united to Don Alphonso, the Prince of Portugal; and for some time after the celebration of these nuptials the court at Seville presented a continual scene of splendour and revelry, banquets, feasts, and tournaments. In the midst of these

external rejoicings the heart of Isabella bled over her approaching separation from her beloved daughter, and the young princess herself wore a look of settled melancholy, which seemed prophetic of the woes of her short-lived marriage.

It was just at this crisis that Columbus renewed his solicitations and pressed for a decided answer to his propositions: he was referred, as before, to a council or board of inquiry, and the final report of this committee of "scientific men" is too edifying to be omitted here. It was their opinion, "that the scheme proposed was vain and impossible; and that it did not become such great princes to engage in an enterprise of the kind, on such weak grounds as had been advanced."*

Notwithstanding this unfavourable report, and the ill offices of Fernando de Talavera, the sovereigns did not wholly dismiss Columbus, but still held out a hope that at a future period, and after the conclusion of the war, they would probably renew the treaty with him. But Columbus had been wearied and disgusted by his long attendance on the court; and he would no longer listen to these evasive and indefinite promises: he quitted Seville in deep disappointment and indignation at the very time that Ferdinand and Isabella were assembling the army destined for the siege of Granada, little suspecting that, while they were devoting all their energies, and expending all their resources, in the conquest of a petty kingdom, they were blindly rejecting the acquisition of a world.

On the 11th of April, 1491, King Ferdinand took the field for this last campaign: his army consisted of 40,000 infantry and 10,000 cavalry. He was accompanied by his son, Don Juan, then a fine youth of sixteen, and by all the chivalry of Castile and Arragon, including the Marquis of Cadiz, and the Marquis of Villena; the Counts de Cabra, de Tendilla, Cifuentes, and Ureña; Don Alonzo de Aguilar and Gonsalvo de Cordova; all names renowned in the annals of Spain. Isabella with her family and retinue remained for a time at Alcala la Real, a strong place on the frontiers; but they soon afterwards quitted this fortress, and took up their residence in the camp before Granada. The Moors, excited by the enthusiasm and example of Muza, their heroic commander,

* *Vide* Life and Voyages of Columbus.

defended their city with courageous obstinacy, and the environs of Granada were the scene of many romantic exploits and renowned deeds of arms. One or two of these adventures, in which Isabella was personally interested, ought to find a place here.

It happened on a certain day, when the siege had already lasted about two months, that a fierce Moorish chief, named El Tarfe, made a sally from the walls with a band of followers. He galloped almost alone up to the Christian camp, leaped the entrenchments, flung his lance into the midst of the royal tent, and then, turning his horse, sprung again over the barriers, and galloped back to the city with a speed which left his pursuers far behind. When the tumult of surprise had ceased, the lance of El Tarfe was found quivering in the earth, and affixed to it a label, purporting that it was intended for the Queen Isabella.

Such an audacious insult offered to their adored and sovereign lady filled the whole Christian host with astonishment and indignation. A Castilian knight, named Perez de Pulgar, deeply swore to retort this insolent bravado on the enemy: accompanied by a few valiant friends, he forced his way through one of the gates of Granada, galloped up to the principal mosque, and there, throwing himself from his horse, he knelt down, and solemnly took possession of it in the name of the Blessed Virgin. Then taking a tablet, on which were inscribed the words AVE MARIA, he nailed it to the portal of the mosque with his dagger, remounted his horse, and safely regained the camp, slaying or overturning all his opponents.

On the day which succeeded this daring exploit Queen Isabella and her daughters expressed a wish to have a nearer view of the city, and of the glorious palace of the Alhambra, than they could obtain from the camp. The noble Marquis of Cadiz immediately prepared to gratify this natural but perilous curiosity; assembling a brilliant and numerous escort, composed of chosen warriors, he conducted Isabella and her retinue to a rising ground near the city, whence they might view to advantage the towers and heights of the Alhambra.

When the Moors beheld this splendid and warlike array approaching their city, they sent forth a body of their bravest youth, who challenged the Christians to the fight. But Isabella,

unwilling that her curiosity should cost the life of one human being, absolutely forbade the combat ; and her knights obeyed, but sorely against their will. All at once the fierce and insolent El Tarfe, armed at all points, was seen to advance ; he slowly paraded close to the Christian ranks, dragging at his horse's tail the inscription "Ave Maria," which Pulgar had affixed to the mosque a few hours before. On beholding this abominable sacrilege, all the zeal, the pride, the long restrained fury of the Castilians burst forth at once. Pulgar was not present, but one of his intimate friends, Garcilaso de le Vega,* threw himself at the feet of the queen, and so earnestly entreated her permission to avenge this insult, that his request was granted ; he encountered and slew the Moor in single combat, and the engagement immediately became general. Isabella, at once shocked by the consequences of her curiosity and terrified by the sudden onset and din of arms, threw herself on her knees with all her ladies, and prayed earnestly, while "lance to lance, and horse to horse," the battle fiercely raged around her : at length victory decided for the Christians, and the Moors were driven back with loss upon the city. The Marquis of Cadiz then rode up to the queen, and, while she yet trembled with agitation, he, with grave courtesy, apologized for the combat which had taken place, as if it had been a mere breach of etiquette, and gallantly attributed the victory to her presence. On the spot where this battle was fought Isabella founded a convent, which still exists, and in its garden is a laurel which, according to the tradition of the place, was planted by her own hand.

Not long afterwards Isabella was exposed to still greater danger. One sultry night in the month of July she had been lying on her couch reading by the light of a taper. About midnight she rose and went into her oratory to perform her devotions, and one of her attendants, in removing the taper, placed it too near the silken curtains which divided her magnificent pavilion into various compartments ; the hangings, moved by the evening breeze, caught fire, and were instantly in a blaze : the conflagration spread from tent to tent, and in

* This Garcilaso de la Vega is said to have been the father of the great poet.

a few moments the whole of this division of the camp was in flames.

The queen had scarcely time to extricate herself from the burning draperies, and her first thought was for the safety of her husband; she flew to his tent: the king, upon the first alarm, and uncertain of the nature of the danger, had leaped from his bed, and was rushing forth half dressed, with his sword in his hand. The king being in safety, Isabella's next thought was for her son; he had already been extricated by his attendant, and carried to the tent of the Marquis of Curba. No lives were lost, but the whole of the queen's wardrobe and an immense quantity of arms and treasures were destroyed.

The Moors, who from their walls beheld this conflagration, entertained some hopes that such a terrible disaster, and the approach of winter, would induce the sovereigns to abandon the siege. Their astonishment was great when they saw a noble and regular city rise from the ruins of the camp. It owed its existence to the piety and magnanimity of Isabella, who founded it as a memorial of her gratitude to Heaven, and at the same time to manifest the determination of herself and her husband never to relinquish the siege while Granada remained standing. The army wished to call this new city by the name of their beloved queen, but the piety of Isabella disclaimed this compliment, and she named it *La Santa Fé*.

It was during the erection of this city that Queen Isabella once more despatched a missive to Columbus, desiring his return to the court, that she might have further conference with him; and she sent him at the same time, with that benevolence which characterised her, a sum of money to bear his expenses, and to provide him with a mule for his journey, and habiliments fitted to appear in the royal presence. He arrived at the city of *Santa Fé* just as Granada, reduced to the last extremity of famine and the loss of its bravest inhabitants, had surrendered on terms of capitulation, and the standard of the Cross and the great banner of Castile were seen floating together on the lofty watch-tower of the Alhambra. It was on the 6th of January, 1492, that Isabella and Ferdinand made their triumphal entry into the fallen city; the unfortunate

Boabdil met them and surrendered the keys to King Ferdinand. He would have dismounted and tendered the usual token of vassalage by kissing the hands of the king and queen, but they generously declined it; and Isabella, with many kind and courteous words, delivered to Boabdil his only son, who had hitherto been detained as a hostage. The Moorish monarch, accompanied by all his family and suite, then took his melancholy way towards the province which had been assigned to him as his future residence. On reaching a hill above Granada (which has since been called by the Spaniards *el ultimo suspiro del Moro*, "the last sigh of the Moor,") Boabdil turned, and casting a last look back on the beautiful Vega, and the glorious city of his forefathers, he burst into tears. "You do well," said his high-spirited mother Ayxa, "to weep like a woman for what you knew not how to defend like a man!" The reproof might have been just, but in such a moment the cruel taunt ill became a mother's heart or lips. Boabdil afterwards retired to Africa, and resided in the territories of the King of Fez. He survived the conquest of Granada thirty-four years, and died at last on the field, valiantly fighting in defence of the kingdom of Fez.

The war of Granada lasted ten years, and with the surrender of the capital terminated the dominion of the Moors in Spain, which, dating from the defeat of Roderick, the last of the Goths, had endured seven hundred and seventy-eight years. When the tumult of this great triumph had in some degree subsided, Isabella had leisure to attend to Columbus, and the negotiation with him was renewed: the terms, however, on which he insisted with a lofty enthusiasm appeared so exorbitant, when compared with his lowly condition and the vague nature of his views, that his old adversary, Fernando de Talavera, now Archbishop of Granada, again interposed between him and the kind intentions of the queen; and said so much, that Isabella, after some hesitation, declared his pretensions to be inadmissible. Columbus, on the other hand, would not abate one iota of his demands: in bitterness of spirit he saddled his mule, and turned his back on Santa Fé. Scarcely had he departed, when two of his most enthusiastic friends, who were besides high in the royal favour, waited on the

queen.* They vindicated Columbus from the aspersions of Talavera ; they entreated, they remonstrated, with all the zeal which their friendship for him and their loyalty to the queen could inspire. The Marchioness of Moya added to their arguments the most eloquent persuasions. Isabella listened ; she had ever been friendly to this great and glorious enterprise, and her enthusiasm was now kindled by that of her friend. She still hesitated for one moment, recollecting how completely the royal treasury was drained by the late war, and that the king, her husband, was coldly averse to the measure : at length she exclaimed, " It shall be so ; I will undertake the enterprise for my own kingdom of Castile, and will pledge my jewels for the necessary sum ! " " This," says the historian of Columbus, " was the proudest moment in the life of Isabella ; it stamped her renown for ever, as the patroness of the discovery of the New World."

A courier was immediately despatched to recall Columbus, who had already reached the bridge of Pinos, two or three leagues from Granada. He hesitated at first, but when he was informed that the messenger came from the queen herself, and bore her pledge and promise, confiding in her royal word he turned his mule at once, and retraced his steps to Santa Fé. The compact between the two sovereigns and Columbus was signed in April 1492, Isabella undertaking all the expenses, except one eighth, which was borne by the Admiral ; and in the following August Columbus set sail from Palos.

The history of his voyages and discoveries does not properly enter into the personal history of Queen Isabella. It may be remarked, generally, that in all her conduct towards Columbus, and all her views and decrees in the government of the newly discovered world, we find the same beautiful consistency, the same generous feeling, and the same rectitude of intention. Next to that moment in which Isabella declared herself the sole patroness of Columbus, and undertook the voyage of discovery for her " own kingdom of Castile," the most memorable epoch of her life was his return from the New World, when she received him in state at Barcelona ; and when, laying at her

* Luis de St. Angel and Alonzo de Quintanilla.

feet the productions of those unknown lands, he gave her a detailed narrative of his wonderful voyage.

Isabella was particularly struck by his account of the inhabitants of these new-found regions; she took a tender interest in their welfare, and often reiterated her special commands to Columbus, that they should be treated with kindness, and converted or civilized only by the gentlest means. Of the variety of circumstances which interposed between these poor people and her benevolent intentions we can only judge by a detailed account of the events which followed, and the characters of those entrusted with the management of the new discoveries. When the most pious churchmen and enlightened statesmen of her time could not determine whether it was or was not lawful, and according to the Christian religion, to enslave the Indians; when Columbus himself pressed the measure as a political necessity, and at once condemned to slavery those who offered the slightest opposition to the Spanish invaders; Isabella settled the matter according to the dictates of her own merciful heart and upright mind. She ordered that all the Indians should be conveyed back to their respective homes, and forbade, absolutely, all harsh measures towards them on any pretence. Unable, at such a distance, to measure all the difficulties with which Columbus had to contend, her indignation fell on him; and the cruelties which his followers exercised, at least under the sanction of his name, drew on him her deep displeasure.

While under the immediate auspices of Isabella these grand discoveries were proceeding in the New World, Ferdinand was engrossed by ambitious projects nearer home. Naples had been invaded by Charles VIII. in 1494, and Gonsalvo de Cordova had been sent to oppose him. Gonsalvo, "the Great Captain," by a series of brilliant military successes and political perfidies of the deepest dye, in the end secured the kingdom of Naples for his master Ferdinand. The legitimate heir, and last descendant of the family of Alphonso the Magnanimous, was brought a prisoner to Spain, and died there, after a captivity of fifty years.

Isabella, meantime, in the interior of her palace, was occupied by interests and feelings nearer and dearer to her

heart than the conquest of kingdoms, or the discovery of worlds ; and during the last few years of her life was gradually crushed to the earth by a series of domestic calamities, which no human wisdom could have averted, and for which no earthly prosperity could afford consolation.

In 1496 her mother, the Queen Dowager of Castile, died in her arms. In 1497, just before Columbus sailed on his third voyage, a double family arrangement had been made between the houses of Spain and Austria, which bade fair to consolidate the power of both. The Infanta Joanna was betrothed to the Archduke Philip, son and heir of the Emperor Maximilian ; and the same splendid and gallant fleet which bore her from the shores of Spain brought back Margaret of Austria,* the destined wife of Prince Juan, the only son of Isabella and Ferdinand. In the spring of 1497 Juan and Margaret, then both in the bloom of youth, were united at Burgos, with all befitting pomp and revelry.

The queen's most beloved daughter, the Princess Isabella, had lost her young husband, Alphonso of Portugal ; within four months after his marriage he was killed by a fall from his horse, and she retired to a convent, where, from an

* Margaret of Austria was one of the most accomplished and remarkable women of that time. Before her marriage with Prince Juan she had been betrothed to Charles VIII. of France, and on her voyage to Spain, meeting with a violent storm which threatened to engulf the whole fleet, she collected her most valuable jewels and bound them on her arm, together with a slip of paper, on which she had written with her pencil the well-known couplet :

“ *Ci-gît Margot, la gentill' demoiselle,
Qu'a deux maris, et encore est pucelle !* ”

a singular instance of strength and presence of mind in a young princess of seventeen. She was afterwards contracted, or married, to two or three husbands successively, but at four-and-twenty, being disgusted with these matrimonial experiments, Margaret determined to pass the rest of her life in a single state. She was afterwards Governess of the Netherlands ; and in the name of her nephew, Charles V., who entrusted her with full powers, she negotiated with Louisa, the mother of Francis I., the Peace of Cambray, hence called in history “ *la paix des dames*.” Margaret died in 1530.

excess of grief or piety, she gave herself up to a course of religious abstinence and austerities which undermined her constitution. Several years after the death of Alphonso she was induced to bestow her hand on his cousin and heir, Don Emanuel, who had just ascended the throne of Portugal. While yet the customary festivities were going forward upon the occasion of this royal marriage, the young Prince Juan died of a fever, within five months after his marriage with Margaret, and her infant perished ere it saw the light. Isabella, though struck to the heart by this cruel disappointment of her best hopes and affections, found strength in her habitual piety to bear the blow, and was beginning to recover from the first bitterness of grief, when a stroke, even more lastingly and deeply felt, bowed her almost to the grave with sorrow. Her daughter, the Queen of Portugal, whom she appears to have loved and trusted beyond every human being, died in childbirth at Toledo, bequeathing to her mother's care a beautiful but feeble infant, the heir to Castile, Arragon, and Granada, to Portugal, Navarre, Naples, Sicily, and to all the opening glories of the eastern and western worlds. As if crushed beneath the burden of such magnificent destinies, the child pined away and died. These successive losses followed so quick upon one another, that it seemed as if the hand of Heaven had doomed the house of Ferdinand and Isabella to desolation.

The reader need hardly be reminded of the ignominious and ungrateful treatment of Columbus, nor of the manner in which he was sent home after his third voyage, loaded with fetters, from the world he had discovered, to the sovereigns he had enriched and aggrandized by his discoveries. In justice to Isabella it is fit to account for her share in this revolting transaction, and it cannot be done better or more succinctly than in the very words of the historian of Columbus.

"The queen having taken a maternal interest in the welfare of the natives, had been repeatedly offended by, what appeared to her, pertinacity on the part of Columbus, in continuing to make slaves of those taken in warfare, in contradiction to her own wishes. The same ships which brought home

the companions of Roldan, brought likewise a great number of slaves. Some Columbus had been obliged to grant to these men by articles of capitulation, others they had brought away clandestinely; among them were several daughters of caciques, who had been seduced away from their families and their native island by these profligates. The gifts and transfers of these unhappy beings were all ascribed to the will of Columbus, and represented to Isabella in their darkest colours. Her sensibility as a woman and her dignity as a queen were instantly in arms. 'What power,' she exclaimed indignantly, 'has the admiral to give away my vassals?' She determined by one decided and peremptory act to show her abhorrence of these outrages upon humanity; she ordered all the Indians to be restored to their country and friends. Nay, more, her measure was retrospective. She commanded that those who had formerly been sent home by the admiral should be sought out, and sent back to Hispaniola. Unfortunately for Columbus, at this very juncture, in one of his letters, he had advised the continuance of Indian slavery for some time longer, as a measure important for the welfare of the colony. This contributed to heighten the indignation of Isabella, and induced her no longer to oppose the sending out of a commission to investigate his conduct, and, if necessary, to supersede his commission." When Columbus had sailed on his first voyage of discovery, Isabella had given a strong proof of her kindly feeling towards him, by appointing his sons pages to Don Juan; thus providing for their education, and opening to them a path to the highest offices in the court: hence, perhaps, arose the friendship which existed between Columbus and Donna Joanna de Torres, who had been nurse or *gouvernante* of the young prince, and was high in the confidence and favour of Isabella. Too proud, perhaps, to address himself immediately to those who had injured him, Columbus wrote to Donna Joanna a detailed account of the disgraceful treatment he had met, and justified his own conduct. The court was then at Granada, and Joanna de Torres in attendance on the queen; no sooner had she received the letter, than she carried it to her mistress, and read aloud this solemn and affecting appeal against the injustice and

ingratitude with which his services had been recompensed. Isabella, who had never contemplated such an extremity, was filled with mingled astonishment, indignation, and sorrow. She immediately wrote to Columbus, expressing her grief for all he had endured, apologizing for the conduct of Bovadilla, and inviting him in affectionate terms to visit the court. He came accordingly, "not as one in disgrace, but richly dressed, and with all the marks of rank and distinction. Isabella received him in the Alhambra; and when he entered her apartment, she was so overpowered that she burst into tears, and could only extend her hand to him. Columbus himself, who had borne up firmly against the stern conflicts of the world, and had endured with a lofty scorn the injuries and insults of ignoble men, when he beheld the queen's emotion, could no longer suppress his own; he threw himself at her feet, and for some time was unable to utter a word for the violence of his tears and sobbings."* There can be no doubt that, had it depended on Isabella, Columbus would never more have had reason to complain of injustice or ingratitude on the part of the sovereigns: he had won her entire esteem and her implicit confidence, and all her intentions towards him were sincerely kind and upright.* It was owing to the interference of Ferdinand and his ministers, that the viceroyalty of the New World was taken from him and given to Ovando, as a temporary measure; but it was under Isabella's peculiar patronage and protection that he sailed on his fourth voyage of discovery in 1502.

Isabella did not live to see him return from this eventful and disastrous voyage. A dark cloud had gathered over her later years, and domestic griefs and cares pressed heavily upon her affectionate heart. The Princess Joanna, now her heiress, had married the Archduke Philip of Austria, who was remarkable for his gay manners and captivating person; the marriage had been one of mere policy on his part. But the poor princess, who, unhappily for herself, united to a plain person and infirm health strong passions and great sensibility, had centered all her affections in her husband, whom she regarded with a fond and exclusive idolatry, while he

* *Vide* Life and Voyages of Columbus.

returned her attachment with the most negligent coolness. It does not appear that the imbecility of Joanna was natural, but rather the effect of accident and disease, for occasionally she displayed glimpses of strong sense, generous pride, and high feeling, which rendered the derangement of her faculties more intensely painful and affecting. Though Isabella had the satisfaction of seeing Joanna a mother, though she pressed in her arms a grandson,* whose splendid destinies, if she could have beheld them through the long lapse of years, might in part have consoled her, yet the feeble health of this infant, and the sight of her daughter's misery, embittered her days. At length, on the departure of Philip for the Low Countries, the unhappy Joanna gave way to such transports of grief, that it ended in the complete bereavement of her senses. To this terrible blow was added another; for about the same time the news arrived that Catherine of Arragon had lost her young husband, Prince Arthur, after a union of only five months. Isabella's maternal heart, wounded in the early death or protracted sorrows of her children, had no hope, no consolation, but in her deep sense of religion. Ximenes was at this time her confessor. In his strong and upright but somewhat harsh and severe mind she found that support and counsel which might aid her in grappling with the cares of empire, but not the comfort which could soothe her affliction as a mother. Ferdinand was so engrossed by his Italian wars, and in weaving subtle webs of policy either to ensnare his neighbours, or veil his own deep-laid plans, that he had little thought or care for domestic sorrows. So Isabella pined away lonely in her grandeur, till the deep melancholy of her mind seized on her constitution, and threw her into a rapid decline. While on her death-bed, she received intelligence of Ovando's tyrannical government at Hispaniola, and of the barbarities which had been exercised upon the unhappy Indians: her horror and indignation hastened the effects of her disease. With her dying breath, she exacted from Ferdinand a solemn promise that he would instantly recall Ovando, redress the grievances of the poor Indians, and protect them from all future oppression. Ferdinand

* Afterwards the Emperor Charles V.

gave the required promise ; and how he kept it is recorded in traces of blood and guilt in the history of the New World. Soon after this conversation Isabella expired at Medina del Campo, after a lingering illness of four months ; she died on the 25th of November, 1505, in the fifty-fourth year of her age, having reigned thirty-one years. In her last will she expressed a wish to be buried in the Alhambra, "in a low sepulchre, without any monument, unless the king, her lord, should desire that his body after death should rest in any other spot. In that case, she willed that her body should be removed and laid beside that of the king, wherever it might be deposited ;" in order, adds this affecting document of her piety, tenderness, and humility,—“in order that the union we have enjoyed while living, and which (through the mercy of God) we hope our souls will experience in heaven, may be represented by our bodies in the earth.”

The character of Isabella, as a woman and a queen, though not free from the failings incidental to humanity, is certainly one of the most splendid and interesting which history has recorded. She had all the talents, the strength of mind, and the royal pride of Queen Elizabeth, without her harshness, her despotism, and her arrogance : and she possessed the personal grace, the gentleness, and feminine accomplishments of Mary Stuart, without her weakness. Her virtues were truly her own ; her faults and errors were the result of external circumstances, and belonged to the times and the situation in which she was placed. What is most striking and singular in the character of Isabella is the union of excessive pride—Castilian pride, amounting at times to haughtiness, and even wilfulness, whenever her dignity as a queen was concerned—with extreme sensibility and softness of deportment as a woman. She adored her husband, and yet would never suffer him to interfere with her authority as an independent sovereign ; and she was as jealous of her prerogative as Elizabeth herself. When the cortes of Arragon hesitated to acknowledge her daughter Joanna the heiress to Arragon as well as to Castile, Isabella exclaimed with all the wilfulness of a proud woman, “Another time it were a shorter way to assemble an army, instead of assembling the states !”

Isabella's extreme deference for the ecclesiastics round her was a misfortune for her people; but, consistently even with the best points in her character, it could not have been otherwise. She was from education, early impressions, and a natural enthusiasm of temper exceedingly devout, according to the received idea of true piety. A Luther had not yet arisen to break asunder those bonds which chained down the most powerful and the most enlightened spirits of that age: Isabella could hardly be expected to think for herself on points which it was considered a deadly sin to discuss, and on which the wisest and greatest men of those times *dared* not entertain a doubt. Yet, while Isabella revered the churchmen as the organs of that church in the bosom of which she reposed her hopes of salvation, her submission was far less blind and bigoted than is usually imagined. She drew a line, beyond which she would not permit the ecclesiastical power to presume. When the President and Council of Valladolid permitted an appeal to the Pope on a matter merely civil, she was so indignant, that she first suspended and then deposed the whole of these functionaries as a warning to others.

While yet a girl Isabella had for her confessor the Dominican Torquemada. This fanatic, of whom we may in charity suppose that his brain was turned by zeal and religious austerities, had extorted from her a promise, ratified by a solemn vow, that if ever she ascended the throne of Castile, she would employ all human means to root heresy and infidelity out of her kingdom. But neither this vow, though subsequently pressed upon her, nor the impetuous eloquence of the fiery Torquemada, nor the arguments of the Cardinal Mendoza, nor the persuasions of her confessor Talavera, nor the influence of her husband, nor all united, could, for a length of time, conquer her repugnance to the establishment of the Inquisition. She consented at last, after resisting for five years; and could she have foreseen all the horrors that ensued, she would herself have died at the stake, rather than have lent her fair name to sanction that infernal engine of tyranny.

It was under the auspices of Isabella that Cardinal Ximenes introduced his famous reforms into the religious orders of Spain. The correction of the horrible abuses which had crept

into the convents was strongly resisted, and occasioned a general outcry of all the clergy. The General of the Franciscans waited on the queen, and remonstrated in high terms against this interference with the privileges of his order; at the same time reflecting severely on Cardinal Ximenes, and his influence over her mind. Isabella listened to this turbulent friar with some impatience; but little accustomed to be dictated to in this style, she at length rose from her seat and desired him to remember who he was, and to whom he spoke. "Madam," replied the monk, undauntedly, "I remember that I am but ashes and dust, and that I speak to Queen Isabella, who is but dust and ashes like myself." Isabella immediately turned from him with a look of cool disdain. The next day he was ordered to quit the kingdom, and Ximenes, supported by the royal power, pursued his system of reformation.

It is worthy of remark, that Isabella, though exposed in early life to all the contagion of a most depraved court, preserved a reputation unsullied even by the breath of calumny. The women who formed her court and habitual society were generally estimable. The men who owed their rise to her particular favour and patronage justified her penetration, and were all distinguished either for worth or talent. The most illustrious were Columbus and Ximenes, certainly the two greatest men of that time, in point of original capacity, boldness of thought, and integrity of purpose. Her husband, Ferdinand, hated and oppressed the former, and hated and feared the latter. Both would have been distinguished in any age, or in any circumstances, but, next to themselves, owed their rise and their fame to Isabella. It was in the reign of Isabella that the Spanish language and literature began to assume a polished and regular form. The two most celebrated poets of her time were the Marquis de Santillana (father of the gay young Duke del Infantado already mentioned) and Juan de Encina, whom she particularly patronised, and who translated the Eclogues of Virgil into Spanish for her pleasure and amusement. She also patronised the newly-invented art of printing. The first printing-press set up in Spain was established at Burgos under her auspices, and printed books and foreign and classical works were imported free of all duty.

Through her zeal and patronage the University of Salamanca rose to that eminence which it assumed among the learned institutions of that period, and rivalled those of Pisa and Padua. She prepared the way for that golden age of Spanish literature which immediately succeeded. Garcilaso de la Vega, the greatest of the Spanish poets, was born in the same year that Isabella died.

The object which Isabella appears to have had most at heart during the whole of her reign was the internal regulation of her states, and the moral improvement of her people. The long civil wars, and the weak, disgraceful reign of her predecessor, had disjointed all the springs of government, had substituted for the royal authority that of many petty tyrants, and filled the country with bands of lawless depredators. Some idea may be formed of the extent of these evils from the fact, that when Isabella repaired to Seville in 1481, for the avowed purpose of apprehending and punishing all those who lived by illegal or violent means, no less than four thousand persons took to flight, conscious that the sword of justice, once unsheathed, must find and strike at their misdeeds. The institution of the Holy Brotherhood (*la Santa Hermandad*), so often alluded to in *Don Quixote*, and the Spanish tales and dramas, was a confederacy of respectable persons of different great cities for the protection of their persons and property in those evil times. Isabella, conscious of its importance, granted the royal sanction to this brotherhood, and caused its officers to be legally incorporated into a kind of royal or national police: this she effected in spite of the most determined opposition from the nobility and higher clergy, who deemed their privileges invaded, and whose power of doing evil was certainly thereby diminished. Of Isabella's innate sense of justice, her magnanimity, her strong and warm affections, her gentle and beneficent disposition, sufficient has been said in the foregoing sketch of her life. Brantome records one speech of hers, but without relating the occasion which gave rise to it. "The fruit of clemency," said Isabella, "is more sweet and grateful to a queen endued by Heaven with beauty, spirit, and the love of true honour, than any gratified vengeance, however just and reasonable."

Upon the whole, Isabella appears to have deserved the simple but beautiful designation which the love of her people bestowed upon her, "*Isabella de la paz y bontad*"—Isabella of peace and goodness; and the universal regret and enthusiastic eulogies with which they embalmed her memory have been ratified by history and posterity.

On the death of Isabella her daughter Joanna, and Philip of Austria, succeeded to the throne of Castile. Ferdinand had promised Isabella on her death-bed that he would never enter into a second marriage which might deprive her children of the inheritance of Arragon. But excited by ambition and jealousy of his son-in-law Philip, Ferdinand ungratefully violated this promise, and within two years after the death of Isabella he married Germaine de Foix, niece of Louis XII. and sister of the celebrated Gaston de Foix: she was then in her eighteenth year, Ferdinand in his fifty-fourth. By this marriage he left no heirs; and on his death, in 1517, his grandson, Don Carlos, the eldest son of Joanna and Philip, ascended the throne of Spain in right of his mother, and was soon afterwards elected Emperor of Germany, by the title of Charles V.



M A R Y,

QUEEN OF SCOTS.

TO a young and candid mind a state of suspicion, mistrust, and uncertainty is at once painful and unnatural. But however disagreeable and difficult it may be to doubt, however pleasant and easy to take all things for granted, the youthful reader ought to be informed that there are certain points on which the highest historical authorities are at variance with each other, and human testimony is so nicely balanced, that every reasonable being has a right, after due reflection and examination, to form his own opinion. Where men of equal information, equal judgment, equal talent, equal candour, differ absolutely and entirely, it must be hard for others to determine. Young people are apt to form rash and hasty judgments; to imagine they know all, when in fact they only know a part. It would teach them a becoming caution in forming, and a becoming modesty in expressing, opinions, if, in the course of their studies, the subjects of dispute were frankly pointed out to them, and the reasons for doubts explained; if they considered the numerous points on which wise, and learned, and good men have found it most difficult to decide, and after all differ from each other. The character and many events of the life of Mary Stuart are among these disputed points. She has had determined, able, and conscientious adversaries; she has found enthusiastic, accomplished, and equally conscientious defenders; and since in this little work no part of the testimony for or against her

can be properly introduced, every controverted point will at least be noticed as such in its place. Those who may not have time or opportunity to consider the works written on both sides of the question should keep their opinions for the present suspended. Let them not permit their compassion for unexampled misfortunes, nor their admiration for acknowledged accomplishments, to bias them on one side; nor their natural horror for imputed crimes, and respect for great names, to incline them on the other. For this is not like some of the disputes which have distracted antiquaries and divided the literary world; it is not as to whether a battle was fought on this spot or that spot, whether an event occurred in this or that year; it is a question of justice or injustice. When Dr. Robertson says that "Humanity will draw a veil over such parts of Mary's conduct as we cannot approve,"—meaning, we presume, over her profligate attachment to Bothwell, and the murder of the husband of her youth, of which he *believes* her guilty,—it may be answered that Humanity will draw no such veil, and ought not; the dead, who are insensible to our pity and our tears, ought at least to have *justice* at our hands for the sake of the living.

The parallel which in Mary's own time, or at least immediately after her death, was drawn between her and Joanna of Naples,* presents so many curious coincidences, and so many striking points of comparison, that it shall be examined hereafter, though not exactly in the spirit of the original author, who appears to have been bitterly prejudiced against both queens. We must first, however, cast a glance over the principal events of Mary's life and reign, and recall the most striking parts of her character, whether founded in nature, or springing from education and external circumstances.

Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, was born in the palace of Linlithgow, on the 7th of December, 1542. Her father James V. was a brave, handsome, gallant, and accomplished prince: her mother was Mary of Guise, sister of the celebrated

* In a work entitled "L'Apologie ou Defense de l'honorable Sentence et très juste Execution de deffuncte Marie Stuard, dernière Regne d'Ecosse," published in England, for the purpose of being distributed abroad, and quoted by Brantome in his life of Joanna.

Duc de Guise, and widow of the Duc de Longueville; she was a woman who in private life was without blame, universally respected for her wisdom and talents, her justice, her piety, and her humanity. She had, however, the high spirit and the passion for political power which characterised the family of Guise, and she lived and died in the midst of troubles which she could not appease, and in the midst of factions which she could not reconcile.

Mary was only seven days old when her father died, and within ten months afterwards she was solemnly crowned at Stirling by Cardinal Beaton, and proclaimed Queen of Scotland. James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, was appointed regent of the kingdom during her minority; but the principal care of the young queen was left to her mother, who watched over her infancy with truly maternal anxiety. A very short time after her birth, a design was formed to match her with young Edward VI. of England, then Prince of Wales. It was a favourite object with Henry VIII. thus to unite the two kingdoms, and he brought over the regent to his views; but the queen-mother and Cardinal Beaton, supported by many of the nobles, strongly opposed a measure which would render Scotland a mere province of England, endanger the Roman Catholic religion, and embroil the country with France, their ancient friend and ally. Arran was obliged to yield to these representations; the treaty of marriage was broken off; and the consequence was a destructive war, in which the Scotch were defeated at the battle of Pinkie with the loss of 8,000 men, and many towns and villages were ravished and pillaged by the English invaders.

At this time Mary resided at Stirling Castle, under the guardianship of Lord Erskine and Lord Livingstone; then she was removed, when about four years old, to Inchmahone, a little island on the lake of Monteith. Her mother selected four young ladies of rank of her own age to be the companions of her studies, and her playmates in this solitude; they all bore the same name, and were afterwards called "the queen's Maries." They were Mary Beaton, Mary Seyton, Mary Fleming, and Mary Livingstone; they are thus alluded to in an old ballad:

“Last night the queen had four Maries,
To-night she'll ha'e but three;
There was Mary Seyton, and Mary Beaton,
And Mary Livingstone, and *me*.”

Who *me* was is not known; for as the four original Maries, one by one, married and left her service, the queen replaced them with new ones of the same name, and seems to have pleased herself with the fancy of having four Maries always in attendance upon her.

The result of the disputes with England was a newer and closer alliance with France, which materially changed the destiny of the young queen. A treaty of marriage was concluded between her and the infant dauphin, Francis, the son of Henry the Second. By this treaty it was agreed that Mary should be sent to France, placed under the care of the French king, and educated in his court; and Henry was to send an army of 6,000 men to aid the Scotch against the English. The articles of this treaty were duly performed on both sides; and the same vessels which brought over the French troops conveyed Mary from her native shore.

In July 1548 she sailed from Dumbarton, accompanied by her guardians, her four Maries, and other attendants, landed at Brest, and proceeded to Paris, where she was received as became the Queen of Scotland and the destined Queen of France. Of the education which Mary received at the French court it is necessary to say a few words, because it must, by influencing her character, have greatly influenced her fate. She was only five years old when she arrived there, and spent thirteen happy years in that country. She was first sent to a convent with the king's daughters, where she made a rapid progress in all the accomplishments they attempted to teach her. Here her enthusiastic disposition and lively fancy were so strongly impressed with religious feelings, and she became so fond of a retired life, that when, in consequence of her too great inclination for the cloister, she was removed to gayer scenes, and obliged to take up her residence in a palace, she shed torrents of tears. She afterwards made frequent visits to the young friends she had left in the convent, and embroidered with her own hands an altar-piece for their chapel.

When we are told that Catherine de Medicis was at the head of that court and society in which Mary's education was completed, we shudder at her very name, and tremble at the idea of the contagion to which the youthful queen was exposed: but we must not forget that at this time Catherine de Medicis was herself a very young woman; she was not long married;—she had given no indication of those perfidious and cruel designs which afterwards worked in “her Italian brain,” and have associated her name with all we can conceive of most detestable. She was respected for her splendid talents, and for the dignity and propriety of her conduct. The Princess Margaret of France, her sister-in-law, was a woman of singular accomplishments and virtue. There was much wickedness and profligacy in the court; but with these two princesses and her own Scottish attendants Mary principally associated. Her governess, Lady Fleming, was a Scotchwoman; and her confessor, Reid, Bishop of Orkney, was also her own countryman. Her uncle, the Cardinal of Lorraine, undertook to direct her studies, and all her tutors were celebrated men: Buchanan taught her Latin; Pasquier instructed her in history; and Ronsard, the most famous of the early French poets, cultivated her taste for poetry. She sung and played on the lute and the virginals (a kind of spinet or harpsichord). The fashion for learning prevailed at that time in France, and Mary profited by it: she understood French, Latin, and Italian perfectly, and she wrote in French with peculiar elegance; she was well acquainted with history and with classical literature; she rode on horseback fearlessly, yet with feminine grace, and was fond of hunting. Her dancing was always admired; we are assured that “in the Spanish minuet she was equalled only by her aunt, the beautiful Anne of Este, and no lady of the court could eclipse her in the galliarde.” Her beauty and the charming expression of her countenance were such that, as her contemporary Brantome asserts, “no one could look upon her without loving her.” When her mother, Mary of Guise, came over to visit her in 1550, she burst into tears of joy, and congratulated herself on her daughter's capacity and loveliness. It is very possible that, in the midst of all these advantages, flattery, and the homage

of those around, may have rendered Mary impatient of contradiction and fond of admiration and pleasure; neither is it too much to suppose that her early initiation into the French court had somewhat blunted in her mind the severity of moral principle. Soon after Mary of Guise returned to Scotland, she was declared queen-regent, and under that name governed the kingdom till her death in 1560.

The marriage so long contemplated between Mary of Scotland and the dauphin was celebrated on the 24th of April, 1558, when Mary was in her sixteenth year. The ceremony was performed in the church of Notre Dame, by the Cardinal of Bourbon, Archbishop of Rouen. "Upon this occasion the festivities were graced by the presence of all the most illustrious personages of the court of France; and when Francis, taking a ring from his finger, presented it to the Archbishop, who, pronouncing the benediction, placed it on the young queen's finger, the vaulted roof of the cathedral rung with congratulations, and the multitude without rent the air with joyful shouts. The spectacle was altogether one of the most imposing which, even in that age of spectacles, had been seen in Paris. The procession, upon leaving the church, proceeded to the palace of the archbishop, where a magnificent collation was prepared; largess, as it moved along, being proclaimed among the people, in the name of the King and Queen of Scots. In the afternoon the royal party returned to the palace of the Tournells; Catherine de Medicis and Mary sitting in one palanquin, and a cardinal walking on each side. Henry and Francis followed on horseback, with a long line of princes and princesses in their train. The chronicler of these nuptials is unable to conceal his rapture, when he describes the manner in which the palace had been prepared for their reception. Its whole appearance, he tells us, was 'light and beautiful as Elysium.' During supper, which was served upon a marble table in the great hall, the king's band, of 'one hundred gentlemen,' poured forth delicious strains of music. The members of parliament attended in their robes, and the princes of the blood performing the part of servitors, the Duke of Guise acting as master of the ceremonies. The banquet being concluded, a series of the most magnificent

masques and mummeries, prepared for the occasion, was introduced. In the pageant, twelve artificial horses of admirable mechanism, covered with cloth of gold, and ridden by the young heirs of noble houses, attracted deserved attention. They were succeeded by six galleys, which sailed into the hall, each rich as Cleopatra's barge, and bearing on its deck two seats, the one filled by a young cavalier, who, as he advanced, carried off from among the spectators, and gently placed in a vacant chair the lady of his love. A splendid tournament concluded these rejoicings."*

Francis was far inferior to his young bride both in person and in mind, and is described as being of a sickly constitution, and of a shy, timid, reserved, but affectionate and kind disposition. They were fond of each other, for they had been brought up together from infancy, with a knowledge that they were destined to pass their lives together. Francis did not survive his marriage more than two years, and during that time Mary treated him with invariable tenderness and respectful attention. At this period of her life Mary was distinguished by the title of "*La Reine Dauphine*."

Soon after the celebration of Mary's nuptials, Queen Elizabeth ascended the English throne: being a Protestant, the see of Rome and the French and Spanish courts refused to acknowledge her; and Mary being indisputably the next heir, was persuaded, or rather was commanded, by the King of France, her father-in-law, and the Guises, her uncles, to assume the title and arms of Queen of England. A fatal mistake, of which she could not then calculate the consequences, but which, by first arousing the jealousy and hatred of Elizabeth, led the way to her own destruction.

In July 1559 the dauphin succeeded to the throne, by the death of his father, Henry II. (who was accidentally killed in a tournament); and in the September following Francis and Mary were solemnly crowned at Rheims King and Queen of France. But the health of the young king was already rapidly declining, and in a few months afterwards he expired at Orleans, whither he had been carried for the benefit of the air. Almost the last words he spoke were expressions

* *Life of Mary Queen of Scots*, vol. i. p. 63.

of tenderness and confidence towards his queen, whom he earnestly recommended to the care of his mother and his brother. Francis was in his eighteenth year when he died, after a reign of about a year and a half. Mary is described by an eye-witness as a "sorrowful widow," and appears to have lamented her husband very sincerely ; indeed, without attributing to her any very passionate regard for her boyish consort, she could not be insensible to the loss of one who had loved her from infancy and by whose death she was left to feel herself a stranger and an intruder in the land which had been the scene of her youthful happiness, of which she had been the crowned queen. Catherine de Medicis, intent upon her own ambitious projects, now viewed her with "jealous leer malign : " Mary had, in early life, wounded the vanity of Catherine by once boasting of her own descent from a "hundred kings," which was supposed to reflect upon Catherine's descent from a company of Florentine merchants (the Medici). This offence, probably unintentional, had rankled in Catherine's vindictive mind. Mary's uncles, the princes of the house of Guise, had been banished from court : all things were changed around her. In this situation she formed the resolution of returning to her native kingdom ; but it was a resolution made with regret and executed with reluctance.

The heads of the Reformed party in Scotland, or, as they were called, the "Lords of the Congregation," had entered into a treaty of peace with Queen Elizabeth—"the treaty of Edinburgh," as it is called in history ; and when this was sent over to Mary to be ratified by her, she found that, by the sixth article, she was bound to resign all right and title to the throne of England "for ever ;" and she absolutely refused to subscribe to a condition which appeared to her so unjust and so degrading. After much reluctance and hesitation, she at length expressed herself content to resign all title to the English crown as long as Elizabeth, or her heirs, existed ; but since she was by birth and by law, and in the eyes of all Europe, the next heir, she would not consent to sign away her unalienable rights, and at the same time those of her posterity. Elizabeth commanded Nicholas Throckmorton, her ambassador in France, to wait on the Scottish queen, and press upon her the expediency of ratifying this treaty ; but Mary was firm,

although her firmness was tempered with courtesy and gentleness. "Though the terms," she said, alluding to the late wars between the two countries, "wherein we have stood heretofore have been somewhat hard, yet I trust that from henceforth we shall accord together as cousins and good neighbours. I mean to retire all the Frenchmen from Scotland who have given jealousy to the queen, my sister, and discontent to my subjects; so that I will leave nothing undone to satisfy all parties, trusting the queen, my good sister, will do the like, and that from henceforth none of my disobedient subjects shall find aid or support at her hands." Throckmorton wished to discover whether she intended to pursue any violent measures with regard to the Scottish Protestants, who were inclined at once to dread and to condemn their Roman Catholic queen. The spirit, intelligence, and firmness of Mary's reply appear extraordinary in a girl of eighteen; but her words are repeated by Throckmorton himself, who was little inclined to favour her. "I will be plain with you," said she: "the religion I profess I take to be the most acceptable to God; and, indeed, I neither know nor desire to know any other: constancy becometh all people well, but none better than princes, and such as have rule over realms, and especially in matters of religion. I have been brought up in this religion; and who might credit me in anything, if I should show myself light in this case? I am none of those that will change their religion every year. But I mean to constrain none of my subjects, though I could wish that they were all as I am; and I trust they shall have no support to constrain me."—Mary had sent to demand of Elizabeth a free passage to her own country (it was a mere point of courtesy and etiquette, usual between one sovereign and another): but it was refused; and Throckmorton, in another conference, attempted to explain the reason of this refusal, again referring to the Treaty of Edinburgh to justify his mistress, whose conduct on this occasion, arising from exasperation and jealousy, was inexcusable and mean, as well as discourteous. Mary replied to the representations of the ambassador with infinite dignity and spirit: "There is nothing that doth more grieve me than that I did so forget myself, as to require of the queen, your mistress, that favour which

I had no need to ask. I may pass well enough home to mine own realm, I think, without her passport or licence; for though the late king, your master, used all the impeachment he could, both to stay me and catch me, when I came hither, yet you know, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, I came hither safely: and I may have as good means to help me home again. It seemeth that the queen, your mistress, maketh more account of my disobedient subjects than she doth of me, their sovereign, who am her equal in degree, though inferior in wisdom and experience, her nighest kinswoman and her next neighbour." She repeated her refusal to subscribe to the Treaty of Edinburgh, and gave her reasons in the most forcible, but at the same time the most courteous terms: denying all intention to wrong or offend Elizabeth, and amply apologizing for the assumption of the crown and arms of England during the life of her late husband, she reminded the ambassador that since that time she had neither borne the arms nor used the title of England. "Methinks," she said, "these my doings might ascertain the queen, your mistress, that what was done before was done by commandment of them that had the power over me; and also in reason she ought to be satisfied, seeing I now order my doings as I tell you." But Elizabeth was neither to be pacified nor satisfied. When Mary embarked at Calais, in August 1561, with a cortege of noble and distinguished persons (among whom were three of her uncles, the Duke D'Anville, son to the Constable Montmorenci, the historian Brantome, and the poet Chatelard, her four Maries, from whom she had never been separated, and several French ladies of distinction), Elizabeth sent out vessels to intercept her; but she passed them in a thick fog, and thus escaped. The grief, almost despair, with which Mary took leave of her adopted country, is well known. She stood upon the deck, gazing through her tears on the fast-receding shore; and when night came on, she caused a couch to be spread for her on the deck, and wept herself to sleep. "I am so far unlike the Carthaginian Dido," said Mary on this occasion, "that she looked perpetually on the sea when Æneas departed, whilst all my regards are for the land."*

* The scene is thus described with the most picturesque *naïveté* by

Mary landed in Scotland on the 20th of August ; and when we consider the distracted state of the country, and the characters of those with whom she was henceforth to be surrounded, we may easily excuse the sensations of terror and sadness with which she approached her capital. The poverty of the country struck her, who had so lately left the fertile plains of France, with a feeling of disappointment. The weather was wet and "dolorous ;" and a serenade of bagpipes with which the populace hailed her seems to have greatly disconcerted her polished attendants ; but Mary took everything in good part, and after a while she so far recovered her gaiety, that the masques and dancing, "the fiddling" and "uncomely skipping," she intro-

Brantome, who was present. "Elle, sans songer à autre action, s'appuye les deux bras sur la poupe de la galère du côté du timon, et se mit à fondre en grosses larmes, jettant toujours ses beaux yeux sur le port et le lieu d'où elle était partie, prononçant toujours ces tristes paroles, 'Adieu, France ; adieu, France !' les repetant à chaque coup : et lui dura cet exercice dolent près de cinq heures jusque qu'il commença à faire nuit, et qu'on lui demanda si elle ne se voulait point ôter de là et super un peu. Alors redoublant ses pleurs plus que jamais, dît ces mots : 'C'est bien à cette heure, ma chère France, que je vous perds du tout de vue, puisque la nuit obscure, et jalouse du contentement de vous voir tant que j'eusse pu, m'apporte un voile noir devant les yeux, pour me priver d'un tel bien. Adieu donc, ma chère France ! que je perds du tout de vue : je ne vous verrai jamais plus.' Ainsi se retira, disant qu'elle avait fait tout le contraire de Didon, qui ne fit que regarder la mer, quand Enée se departit d'avec elle, et elle regardait toujours la terre. Elle voulut se coucher sans avoir mangé, et ne voulut descendre en bas dans la chambre de poupe, mais on lui fit dresser la traverse de la galère en haut de la poupe, et lui dresser son lit. Et reposant un peu, n'oubliant nullement ses soupirs et larmes, elle commanda au timonnier, sitôt qu'il serait jour, s'il voyait et découvrait encore le terrain de la France, qu'il l'éveillait et ne craignit de l'appeller : à quoi la fortune la favorisa ; car le vent s'étant cessé et ayant recours aux rames, on ne fit guères de chemin cette nuit ; si bien que le jour paraissant, parut encore le terrain de la France, et n'ayant failli le timonnier au commandement qu'elle lui avait fait, elle se lève sur son lit et se mit à contempler la France encore tant qu'elle peut. Mais la galère s'éloignant, elle éloignait son contentement, et ne vit plus son beau terrain. Adonc redoubla encore ces mots : 'Adieu, France ! cela est fait. Adieu, la France ! je pense ne vous voir jamais plus !'"

duced into Holyrood House, gave great offence to John Knox and the rest of the grave Reformers ; though they might have been forgiven, one would think, to a young and beautiful queen who was "brought up in joyousness."

Mary was warmly attached to her own religion : the truth and excellence of the Reformed doctrines were not understood or appreciated by her ; she was shocked by the sacrilegious destruction of the ancient cathedrals and monasteries, and disgusted by the excessive austerity of the Presbyterians : she yielded, however, to what she could not help. Her conduct in this respect is one of the disputed points already alluded to. Some historians assert that Mary merely endured the ascendancy of the Reformed party, with the secret intention of crushing it the moment she had the power to do so, and exterminating those who adhered to it. Others, appealing to the moderation she had already expressed, and to the natural kindliness of her disposition, deny the truth of this accusation.

The leading men in Scotland at this time were Mary's natural brother, the Lord James Stuart, afterwards the Earl of Murray, a very able and accomplished man, but artful, ambitious, and devoted to the English interests ; the Earl of Morton, who was of a cruel, rapacious, and factious disposition ; Sir William Maitland of Lethington, the Secretary of State, a learned man and profound politician : these were of the Reformed persuasion. At the head of the Roman Catholics were Gordon Earl of Huntley, Hamilton Duke of Chatelherault, and his son the Earl of Arran. But the principal guidance of affairs rested with the Earl of Murray, to whom Mary, in the commencement of her reign, trusted implicitly : the chief power was possessed by the Reformers, and most of the members of the privy council were Protestants. Bothwell, who became afterwards so fatally conspicuous, was at this time regarded as a powerful nobleman, retaining the offices he held under the former government, but not yet regarded with favour in the court of Mary : he was a daring and violent man, as wicked as he was daring, as crafty as he was violent, coarse and brutal in his manners, and described by a contemporary as one of the ugliest men in existence. Among the foreign princes who at this time solicited the hand of the Queen of Scots were Don Carlos, the son of

Philip the Second, the Archduke Charles of Austria, and the Prince de Condé : but Mary was not inclined to marriage ; she was well aware that a foreign alliance would be impolitic, displeasing to her people, and offensive to Elizabeth. Among her suitors at home were the Earl of Arran and Sir John Gordon : but neither of these were fortunate enough to win her favour ; though Sir John Gordon (who of all her lovers is the only one who is supposed to have been attached to Mary for her own sake), certainly captivated her attention, and, but for the interference of Murray, might possibly have won her heart.

It is observable that all the events of Mary's reign were of a domestic nature ; she carried on no foreign wars, nor did she interfere with the affairs of other countries. Her personal and her political history are the same, and cannot be considered separately, as in the case of many other princes.

The first occurrence of any importance after Mary's return from France was her expedition to the north, to put down the power of the Gordons ; a powerful and warlike clan, who had risen against the crown, or, at least, were suspected of hostile and treasonable intentions. The queen's brother, Lord Murray, had his own reasons for being a personal enemy of the Gordons. Mary, who confided in his superior age and experience, perceived his acknowledged abilities, and had at present no reason to doubt his integrity or his devotion to her, left the management of this affair to him. She herself marched on horseback at the head of her troops, and displayed great spirit and intrepidity. A battle was fought at Corrachie, near Aberdeen, between Murray and the Earl of Huntley, the chief of the Gordons, in which Huntley was defeated. On beholding the destruction of his clan and family, the unfortunate earl fell dead from his horse without a wound ; and his son, Sir John Gordon, Mary's rejected lover, was taken prisoner, tried, condemned, and executed at Aberdeen. Murray insisted that the queen should be present at this execution, as a measure of policy, and that the public might be convinced that she gave her countenance to all these proceedings. The young queen yielded most reluctantly ; but being brought to the window opposite to the scaffold, she fainted away, and could not for some time be recovered. The eldest brother of Sir John Gordon was also taken prisoner, and

found guilty; but Mary, perhaps remembering this terrible scene, could never be persuaded to sign his death-warrant: and some time afterwards he was restored to favour. The court returned to Edinburgh on the 22d of November, 1562, after an absence of three months, during which time the queen visited all the principal towns and castles to the north of her capital.

Poor Chatelard, a half-mad poet of that time, was executed for treason in the beginning of the year 1563. As his name has become celebrated from being associated with that of Mary, I shall add the account of him from Chalmers. "When the queen arrived from France, there came in the train of Monsieur D'Anville * one Chatelard, a gentleman by birth, a soldier by profession, a scholar from education, and a poet by choice.† He returned with D'Anville to France, after enjoying from the rank of his protector the various amusements of Mary's court. In November 1562 he again visited Scotland, bringing letters from D'Anville and others to the queen. It is supposed that the duke employed him as the interpreter of his passion for Mary, but that Chatelard was mad enough to entertain hopes for himself—upon what grounds we cannot now judge." He proceeded the full length, on the 12th of February, 1563, of concealing himself in the queen's bed-chamber, with his sword and dagger beside him. He was discovered; but the fact was concealed from the queen by her female attendants, from prudential motives, till the morning: on being made acquainted with this piece of temerity, the queen commanded Chatelard out of her sight, and banished him from the court. The queen, with a part of her train, left Edinburgh on the 13th, and slept at Dunfermline: on the 14th she proceeded to Burnt Island, where she slept. Having retired to her chamber, Chatelard followed her thither, and suddenly presented himself before her, to clear himself, as he said, from the former imputation. She ordered him to be gone: he refused; and, astonished at his audacity, the queen was fain to cry out for help. "The Earl of Murray was sent for, when the queen in her agitation and terror

* The Duc D'Anville was second son of the famous Constable Anne Montmorenci, and one of Mary's most ardent admirers.

† According to Brantome, Chatelard was the grand-nephew of the Chevalier Bayard, and resembled him in person.

called out to him to defend her, and strike his dagger into the intruder ; but Murray thought proper to send him to ward, reserving this daring or infatuated miscreant to the due course of the law, which would lay open the whole transaction." He was tried at St. Andrew's, condemned to death, and executed on the 22d of February. He refused to avail himself of any minister or confessor, but having read aloud Ronsard's hymn on Death, he turned towards the palace, and exclaimed, "Adieu, la plus belle et la plus cruelle princesse du monde !" He then quietly submitted to the stroke of the executioner. As his crimes rose from a heated imagination and a too daring admiration of the queen, we may wish that Mary had extended her mercy to him, or could have done so without drawing suspicion on herself.

It was at this time David Rizzio first rose into notice and favour. He had arrived in 1561, in the train of the Ambassador of Savoy. The three pages, or *songsters*, who used to sing trios before Mary, wanted a fourth as a bass, and Rizzio was recommended and appointed. Being not only the most scientific musician in the household, but likewise a good penman, well acquainted with French and Italian, supple and intelligent, Rizzio contrived to make himself generally useful, and was appointed French secretary to Queen Mary in 1564, which office he retained till his death.

The next important event was Mary's marriage, in 1565. Two years had passed away in tranquillity, during which Mary had exerted herself to win the affection of her subjects, and propitiate the Reformers. John Knox, whose piety and integrity were unquestionable, but whose zeal was rather violent, and betrayed at times both his judgment and his feeling as a man, treated her sometimes with severity, and confesses that he once made her weep, "so that they could scarcely get handkerchiefs to hold her eyes dry," by the bitterness and insolence of his reprimand.* But, on the whole, the two or three years previous

* Even on her first arrival in Scotland, and before she could have given any real or pretended cause of offence against his party, Knox, as we are told, "did knock so hastily upon her heart, that he made her to weep ;" but, adds the writer, (Randolph), "there be some of her sex

to her marriage may be considered prosperous and happy. She gave four or five hours every day to state affairs : she was accustomed to have her embroidery frame placed in the room where her privy council met, and while she plied her needle she listened to the discussions of her ministers, displaying in her opinions and suggestions a vigour of mind and a quickness of perception which astonished the statesmen around her. At other times she applied herself to literature, particularly poetry and history. She brought a great many books with her to Scotland ; and the first artificial globes that had ever been seen there were in her library. She was exceedingly fond of music, and entertained a band of minstrels, whom she paid generously. Her other amusements were dancing, hunting, and hawking, and she was fond of walking much in the open air. A love of gardening was one of her favourite pursuits. She had brought from France a little sycamore plant, the first, according to tradition, which had ever been seen in Scotland : this she planted in the gardens of Holyrood, and from this parent stem arose the beautiful groves of sycamore which are now met with in Scotland. She did not encourage tournaments, from a horror of accidental bloodshed. She was fond of playing at chess, and excelled in it. She delighted in masques, such as were the fashion of that day, which generally exhibited some allegorical representation, with verses and music. Sir James Melville says, that "when she had leisure from the affairs of her country, she read upon good books the histories of divers countries, and sometimes would play on the lute and the virginals, reasonably for a queen : " he adds, that "she was anxious to know and to get intelligence of the state of other countries, and would be sometimes sad when she was solitary, and glad of the company of them that had travelled to foreign parts." To this it may be added, that she rose habitually at eight, supped at seven (supper being then the principal meal), and went to rest at ten. She endeavoured to conciliate Elizabeth, and the two queens made a great exhibition of courtesy and compliment and sisterly affection towards each other, though at the same time that will do that as well for anger as for grief." Mary's tears might well have sprung from both.

Mary, who could not easily forgive the injurious treatment she had already received from Elizabeth, regarded her with suspicion and resentment ; and the English queen beheld her beautiful rival with envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness.

Mary, however, paid Elizabeth the compliment of consulting her on her marriage. To choose a consort pleasing to herself, agreeable to her subjects, and not likely to give umbrage to the Queen of England, appeared not only difficult, but impossible. Elizabeth proposed her favourite, Dudley Earl of Leicester, not without some intention of offending her "good sister," but certainly without any wish or any expectation that the proposal should be acceded to. Mary was, in truth, deeply and justly affronted. The grandfather of Leicester had been one of the mean and upstart instruments of Henry the Seventh's extortion ; he himself was the minion of Elizabeth, and his character universally odious. Mary refused, of course, to listen to him, and Elizabeth found something to object against every other. At length Mary cast her eyes on young Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, and though the event proved that she could not have made a more rash and fatal choice, yet at the time many circumstances rendered it most eligible. Darnley, who was of the blood royal, was first cousin to Mary,* and second cousin to Elizabeth : he was a Protestant. He was possessed of all external accomplishments, being remarkably tall, handsome, and graceful, "well instructed in all comely exercises ;" and, to please Mary, he affected a degree of refinement, and a taste for music and poetry, which, in reality, he did not possess. Those vices of temper and disposition he afterwards betrayed were of course kept out of sight. The principal objection that could be made to him was his youth, for he was not more than nineteen. His mother, Lady Lennox, "a very wise and discreet matron," Rizzio, and others, instructed him in the best methods of rendering himself agreeable to the queen, in which he succeeded. They were married on the 29th July, 1565, when Mary was in her twenty-third year ; and Darnley received from his bride the title, and many of the privileges, of the King of Scotland.

* The Countess of Lennox, mother of Henry Lord Darnley, was half sister to James V. and first cousin to Queen Elizabeth.

For a short time Mary thought herself happy, in spite of the unreasonable displeasure of Elizabeth and the murmurs of some of her nobility. Murray, whose power was shaken by this event, ventured to rebel openly, but was vigorously opposed by the queen, and obliged to take shelter in England. However, before many weeks were past, Mary began to repent of her imprudent marriage. Darnley was a headstrong, conceited boy, whose head was turned by his exaltation. He was indeed husband of the queen, but she was by birth and law his sovereign, to whom he owed in public all external marks of duty and respect. As a woman who had freely bestowed on him that favour for which the greatest princes of Europe had sued in vain, he owed to her unbounded love and gratitude. But Mary's tenderness and merit were equally thrown away upon him, and instead of respect, devotion, and gratitude she met with neglect, brutality, and insolence. Among his other vices, he was addicted to drinking, and within four months after his marriage, "at an entertainment in a merchant's house in Edinburgh, she only dissuading him from drinking too much himself and enticing others, in both which he proceeded, he gave her such words, that she left the palace with tears."* Darnley bore the title of king: but this did not satisfy him; he wished to have all the power and privileges which had been conferred on Francis by the Scottish Parliament—"the crown matrimonial," as it was termed; and less would not content him. But as his temper and character became better known to Mary, she felt a natural disinclination to entrust him with farther power; and in this resistance she was confirmed by the advice of her secretary, David Rizzio.

The young king, who could not endure contradiction, was loud in his discontent, sullen and insolent in his demeanour, and threw out various threats against Rizzio. Several noblemen, at the head of whom was the Earl of Morton, already mentioned, encouraged and exasperated him still more for their own selfish views: the removal of Rizzio, and an utter breach between the queen and her husband, were precisely what they most wished for; and a conspiracy was formed, so dark and

* See Randolph's letters.

daring in its contrivance and so atrocious in its object, that we cannot think of it without astonishment, pity, and horror. It was resolved to assassinate Rizzio; and among the ruffians who undertook to perpetrate this deed, in the very presence of a woman and their queen, were the king her husband, the Lord Chancellor (Morton), the Justice-General of the kingdom, and several Lords of the Privy Council. What a picture of barbarism! The details of the murder of Rizzio are well known. On the 9th of March, 1566, while sitting at supper with the queen and some other ladies, he was attacked by the conspirators, stabbed over Mary's shoulder, who attempted to defend him, then dragged out of the room, and despatched at the head of the staircase. Mary was kept locked up in her chamber (where this horrible scene had taken place) the whole night; even her women were not allowed to approach her; but the next day, which was Sunday, Darnley came to her: he could not stand in her presence without feeling some remorse and fear, and Mary, who was ignorant of the whole extent of his guilt, employed all her eloquence to induce him to forsake the desperate men with whom he was leagued, and escape with her: he consented, and they fled together to Dunbar.

The wrongs and insult which had been offered to Mary were so apparent, that she was soon at the head of a powerful army: she consented to pardon Murray and Argyle; but the cruel and perfidious Morton, and the two barbarians, Ruthven and Lindsay, who were among the immediate perpetrators of Rizzio's murder, she threatened with the extremity of her vengeance. They fled to England, always the safe asylum of Mary's enemies, and remained there in safety for some months, till her resentment began to wear away, and other objects engrossed her attention and her feelings.

In June 1566 Mary gave birth to a son in the castle of Edinburgh, whither she had retired with her husband and her brother, Lord Murray, for the sake of quiet and safety. After her recovery, she made a short progress through the country for the benefit of her health, accompanied by the king and her infant son; but, though generally together, Mary and her husband were not on good terms: he had deeply disgusted

her, and had incurred general contempt and odium by the weakness and ill temper he displayed on every occasion.

It was at this time that Bothwell—the restless, ambitious, dissolute, and daring Bothwell—found favour at court. His character was well known, but through all these troubles, and amid all the treasons and treachery of those who surrounded her, he had remained faithful to Mary's interests. With regard to the two principal imputations against her: first, of having regarded Bothwell with stronger feelings of approbation than as a virtuous woman she ought to have done; secondly, of having participated in his subsequent crimes, and conspired with him the death of her husband:—these are points on which historians have set forth a mass of contradictory evidence. Some consider her as deeply stained with guilt, tempting at once and tempted; others have pronounced her the helpless victim of a dark, cruel, and designing man. But to return to well-known and undisputed facts: soon after the birth of her son the General Assembly of the Kirk sent a deputation to the queen, praying that she would be graciously pleased to allow the young prince to be educated in the Reformed faith. To have acceded to this request would have been against her conscience; to refuse it was perilous. Mary released herself from this dilemma with that grace and woman's wit for which she was remarkable; she replied to the deputies benignly, but without making any definite promise, and, calling for her son, she placed him herself in the arms of their spokesman: the grave minister, unable to withstand so much sweetness, pronounced over the infant a prayer for its future prosperity, and at the conclusion won from it a kind of indistinct murmur, which the good man interpreted into an "Amen." The queen, amused by this scene, and gratified in her maternal feelings, loaded the minister with thanks and expressions of the kindest import, playfully styling him "Mr. Amen," by which name he was afterwards known. The baptism of the infant prince took place at Stirling, on the 19th of December, 1566. Elizabeth—notwithstanding her envious and repining exclamation, that "the Queen of Scots should be mother of a fair son while she was only a barren stock"—stood godmother, and despatched the Earl of Bedford

as her ambassador on this occasion, while she deputed the Countess of Argyle to officiate as her proxy. She also presented a font of gold to her godson, with a letter full of congratulations and compliments to his mother.

The conduct of Darnley meanwhile was so offensive and grievous to his queen, and she was so distracted by the turbulent passions and the discontent of those around her, partly excited by his ill behaviour, that in the midst of the splendid rejoicings and festivities which accompanied the christening of her son she was often seen in tears, and was heard to wish herself dead. She would not, however, consent to be divorced from Darnley, though a divorce was urged, not by Bothwell only, but by her brother, Lord Murray, the Earl of Huntley, Maitland, and others of her counsellors. A fear of the consequences to her son, and a feminine horror against the expedient altogether, seem to have been felt by her, or at least were strongly expressed in her decided reply to her counsellors: "I will that you do nothing by which any spot may be laid on my honour and conscience, and, therefore, I pray ye let the matter be in the estate that it is abiding, till God of His goodness put a remedy to it. That which you believe would do me a service, may possibly turn to my hurt and displeasure."

Finding the queen immoveable on this point, Bothwell whose object it was to make himself master of her and the government, decided on the murder of Darnley: he was then recovering from the small-pox, and lodged for the benefit of the air in a house, called the Kirk-of-field, near Edinburgh. Mary was a great deal with him during his convalescence. Subdued by illness, and removed from his evil counsellors, Darnley was no longer peevish, wayward, or violent, but penitent and grateful for kindness; and Mary, in whose favour mind enmity and hatred were ever short-lived, appeared touched by the condition of him, "her life so late, and sole delight," and treated him with tenderness. She sometimes brought her band of musicians up from Holyrood House to amuse him. But on Sunday, the 9th of February, a day far more memorable in the history of Mary, after having visited as usual, she left him to be present at an entertainment given at the palace of Holyrood, to celebrate the marriage

her French servant Sebastian with Margaret Carwood, one of her ladies in waiting. While engaged in these festivities, the house in which her husband slept was blown up with gunpowder, and his body and that of his servant were found in a garden at some distance. He perished in his twenty-first year, having reigned only eighteen months. Of the grief and horror which Mary displayed on this occasion it is not necessary to speak: evidently, however, she felt more horror than grief, and considering how little reason she had to regret Darnley, it is something in favour of her sincerity, that she did not seem to *act* a part, but recovered herself quickly, and resumed all her self-possession.

So many circumstances conspired to fix suspicion on the Earl of Bothwell, that he was brought to trial on the accusation of the Earl of Lennox, the father of the murdered king. But the trial was fixed for an early day, the proceedings hurried over; Lennox himself, pleading the shortness of the time, did not appear against him; and Bothwell, in the absence of his legal accuser, was acquitted by a jury composed of the first noblemen in the kingdom.

Bothwell's next object was to marry the queen: and the steps taken for this purpose, if with Mary's consent, were as incomprehensible and apparently unnecessary as they were unpardonable; if taken without her participation, and contrary to her will, the expedients resorted to were so base and villainous, that they cannot even be glanced at without horror. The queen, we are told, was returning from Stirling Castle, towards Edinburgh, with a small retinue, when Bothwell, at the head of 1,000 armed men, encountered her on Fountain Bridge, about a mile from Linlithgow, seized the reins of her horse, and carried her, without any resistance, to the castle of Dunbar, where he kept her closely "sequestered" for a fortnight: during the first week her own servants had not access to her. During the second week a privy council was called, attended by two or three nobles devoted to Bothwell. He had previously contrived to have a bond signed by one archbishop, four bishops, and sixteen of the most distinguished noblemen and statesmen of the time, in which he was recommended to the queen as a fit and proper husband for her Majesty: the subscribers to

this infamous bond obliged themselves by oath "to advance and set forward such marriage by word and deed, and to consider as a common enemy whoever should oppose it." Armed with this document, and having procured with disgraceful celerity a divorce from his wife, Lady Jane Gordon, Bothwell brought the queen back to Edinburgh on the 3d of May, and on the 15th of May this guilty and fatal marriage was solemnized.

If Mary had been disgusted by the coarse vices of Darnley, what must she not have suffered, when she found herself in the power of the ruffian Bothwell? She passed but one month with him, and this month is usually considered as the most miserable of her miserable life. He treated her with such indignity, that a day did not pass in which he "did not cause her to shed abundance of salt tears." He surrounded her with a guard, so that none of her movements could be said to be voluntary; and once, in a paroxysm of passion and despair, she threatened her own life. Those very lords who had signed the bond already mentioned in his favour, now made this marriage a pretence for rebellion, but still without breathing a syllable that could cast an imputation on Mary. A party, at the head of which was the Earl of Morton, with the ostensible purpose of delivering their "Sovereign Lady's most noble person" from the power of Bothwell (for she was not at this time accused of having placed herself willingly in his hands), had assembled at Stirling. Bothwell on his part called his followers together in the queen's name, and the two factions met at Carberry Hill. Here a negotiation was entered into, for both parties seemed averse to an immediate engagement, and Mary took a very unexpected and decisive step. She agreed at once to dismiss Bothwell, and place herself in the hands of the adverse party, if they would be answerable for her safety and return to their allegiance. This was agreed to; she persuaded Bothwell to ride off the field, and he retired to Dunbar. They never met again. And thus, in less than a month, this disgraceful union was virtually ended: its fatal consequences terminated not so soon—they ended only with the life of Mary.

The nobleman to whose loyalty Mary had trusted her safety and her person brought her to Edinburgh, where she was

received with insults instead of honour. A ghastly banner was displayed before her, on which was depicted the body of the murdered Darnley, and the young prince kneeling by his side, with this legend, "Judge and avenge my cause, O Lord." Faint, weary, terrified, covered with dust, and bathed in tears, she was thus led through the town to the Provost's house. After being kept in constraint for a few days, the lords, who feared that the populace would rise in her favour, conveyed her forcibly to the castle of Lochleven, where she was kept a close prisoner, without any of the attendance befitting her rank. This, her first captivity, took place in June 1567.

While Mary was shut up in the castle of Lochleven, the rebel lords extorted from her a formal abdication of the crown in favour of her infant son. The unhappy queen signed this paper in a paroxysm of tears, exclaiming against the violence used towards her, and calling all present to witness that it was done in fear of her life, and therefore not valid. It appears that at this time she did not believe her brother, Lord Murray, so deeply implicated in the plots against her as he really was ; for, with a fond confidence, which, if Murray had a heart, must have wrung it to its core, she flung her arms round him, pressed him to her bosom, and entreated him to take on himself the regency, "for the protection of her son, until she should be liberated." This was the end and aim of all Murray's machinations : he left his sister, deceived for the present, was immediately proclaimed regent during the minority of the young king, and Mary was declared to have forfeited all right and title to the throne. Eleven months were passed by Mary in close confinement, under the particular custody of Lady Margaret Douglas, styled in those times "the Lady of Lochleven ;" and her captivity was further embittered by the stern and harsh temper of this woman, who had motives for private and personal irritation against the prisoner. But the second son of Lady Margaret, and a boy of about fifteen, who was called *little William Douglas*, could not behold the misfortunes of Mary without pity and sympathy, and resolved to undertake her deliverance. The first attempt failed through the carelessness of the queen herself. She had succeeded in leaving the castle in the disguise of a laundress, with whom she had changed clothes ; and when seated in the

boat, which was pushing from the shore, she betrayed herself by lifting her hand to her head. The beauty and extreme whiteness of that hand discovered her at once, and she was carried back to her chamber in tears and bitterness of heart. The next attempt was more successful. At midnight on the 3d of May, 1568, William Douglas contrived to possess himself of the keys of the portal: a small skiff was in waiting under the walls of the castle; in this he placed the queen and her maid, Jane Kennedy, and rowed across the lake to the opposite shore, where George Douglas and a few faithful friends were waiting to receive them. The queen was then mounted on a swift horse and brought to Niddry, the house of Lord Seaton, where she took some repose, and was thence brought to Hamilton, her friends and followers increasing every hour. The strongest enthusiasm was excited in her favour. Many nobles of the highest distinction for rank and character crowded to her standard, and in three days after her escape from the solitary towers of Lochleven she found herself at the head of six thousand men devoted to her cause.

Hamilton not being fortified, her partisans resolved to convey her to the castle of Dumbarton, a place of strength, where she would be in safety from her enemies; and accordingly they commenced their march northwards.

In the meantime the Regent Murray had assembled his troops at Glasgow, and hastened to oppose her: and when we consider that Murray was the brother of Mary; that she had loaded him with benefits and honours, and twice pardoned him for treason against herself; and that on this occasion he was pursuing the destruction of the mother, in the name and under the banner of her own son, it is scarcely possible to conceive any thing more frightful and unnatural than such a state of things. The two armies met at Langside, a little village to the south of Glasgow. The queen wished to avoid an engagement, but the headstrong impatience and enthusiasm of her adherents were not to be restrained, and the mortal strife began. From a neighbouring eminence Mary viewed the vicissitudes of a battle on which her fate depended. She beheld,—with what anguish of heart we may imagine,—the fortune of the day turn against her; she saw through blinding tears her faithful friends cut to pieces, taken prisoners, or flying before the victorious

Murray. When all was indeed lost, her general, Lord Herries, came to her, seized her bridle, and turned her horse's head from the dismal scene. They fled southwards, with a few adherents, nor stayed nor reposed till they had reached Dundrennan, sixty miles from the field of battle.

There Mary, trusting in Elizabeth's late professions of attachment, took the fatal resolution of passing into England, to throw herself upon the compassion and protection of the English queen : and such protection she found indeed as the wolf affords the lamb which has strayed into his den ; such pity as the dove, escaped "with plumage all impaired" from the talons of the hawk, finds within the snares of the watchful fowler. It was on Sunday, the 13th, of May, 1568, that the Queen of Scots quitted, for the last time, her own dominions, and landed at Workington, in Cumberland ; and though she was received with great show of respect, and treated with the honours due to her rank by the gentlemen residing near the borders, yet from that moment may be dated her long and sorrowful captivity of nearly nineteen years.

When Mary arrived in England, her retinue consisted of about twenty persons, among whom were Lesley, Bishop of Ross, an excellent prelate and an accomplished man ; the good Lord Herries, Lord Livingstone, and Lord Fleming ; her deliverers, George and William Douglas ; two secretaries, Sebastian the Frenchman, and his wife ; Ladies Livingstone and Fleming ; and Mary Seaton, the only one of the original Maries who survived to her. All these, with the exception of the two secretaries, remained true and attached to her till death. She was at this time in her twenty-sixth year, in the very prime of existence, in the full bloom of her beauty and her health, when a dark pall was flung over her life. Thenceforward Mary's history presented one painful picture of monotonous suffering on the one hand ; of meanness, treachery, and cruelty on the other. Elizabeth, with relentless and perfidious policy, kept her rival in perpetual bonds ; the only changes were from prison to prison, and from one harsh keeper to another, from the gleam of a delusive hope to the tenfold darkness of succeeding disappointment.

Elizabeth arrogated to herself the right of deciding between

Mary and her Scottish subjects. A conference met at York, in which the Queen of Scotland and the Queen of England were represented by their respective commissioners, and the Regent Murray appeared in person. In this conference Murray and his confederates accused Mary of participating in the murder of her husband, and of other monstrous crimes, which rendered her not only unfit to govern, but unfit to live; and they produced as proofs of her guilt certain letters said to have passed between the queen and Bothwell. The commissioners of the Queen of Scots, acting from her written instructions, repelled these accusations, declared the letters to be forgeries, and formally accused Murray, Morton, and the rest of high treason and scandal against their sovereign. This famous conference, by the artful management of Elizabeth, closed without coming to any decision; and as Lord Murray had been permitted to return to Scotland, Mary required that she also should be set at liberty, as there could be no longer the slightest pretence for keeping her under restraint. In answer, it was intimated, that if she would voluntarily confirm her forced abdication, and renounce her throne and kingdom, she should be permitted to reside in quiet and privacy in England. "The eyes of all Europe," replied Mary, with her usual spirit, "are upon me at this moment; and were I thus tamely to yield to my adversaries, I should be pronouncing my own condemnation. A thousand times rather would I submit to death than inflict this stain upon my honour. The last words I speak shall be those of the Queen of Scotland."

Thus refusing her liberty on these conditions, she remained a captive. In 1569 she was removed from Bolton to the castle of Tutbury, in Staffordshire, and placed in the custody of the Earl of Shrewsbury and his wife, the famous "Bess of Hardwicke," a woman of penurious and rapacious character, and of a most violent and jealous temper. Both were honourable but most strict and watchful guardians. Great fears were obviously entertained of the power of Mary's charms over those who were suffered to approach her. "If I might give advice" (writes one of the statesmen who saw her at this time); "there should be very few subjects of this land have access to

a conference with this lady ; for besides that she is a goodly personage (and yet in truth not comparable to our sovereign), she hath withal an alluring grace, a pretty Scotch speech, and a searching wit, clouded with mildness. Fame might move some to relieve her ; and glory, joined to gain, might stir others to adventure much for her sake." The advice contained in this letter was too acceptable not to be followed, and every succeeding year found Mary reduced in society, comforts, and health. Her principal occupation was needlework, and her amusements reading and composition : she retained her early love of literature, and it was now, next to her religious feelings and hopes, her best resource. The unvarying mildness and saintlike patience with which Mary endured her long captivity is the more remarkable, if we remember that she was disinclined to sedentary amusements, and by nature and habit fond of walking, riding, gardening, hunting, hawking, and all exercises in the open air. Her gentleness, therefore, under a restraint so painful and so heart-wearing, may be considered as a proof of singular sweetness of temper and strength of mind, if we must not admit it as a proof of a clear and tranquil conscience. One of Cecil's emissaries, who visited her at Tutbury, with wondrous impudence and hypocrisy recommended to her "to thank God that, after so many perils, she had arrived in a realm where, through the goodness of Queen Elizabeth's majesty, she had rather cause to regard herself as receiving princelike entertainment, than as suffering the slightest restraint." To which Mary replied meekly, "That indeed she had great cause to be thankful to Heaven and to her good sister for such ease as she enjoyed ; and that though she would not pretend to ask of God contentment in a state of captivity, she made it her daily petition that He would endue her with patience to endure it."*

Ronsard, the French poet, who had known, admired, and celebrated her when she was young, addressed a book of verses to her in her captivity. In many of these poems there is much beauty and deep feeling ; and Mary, who received this tribute with gratitude and pleasure, at a time when she

* Letter of Nicholas Whyte.

seemed to have fallen into total oblivion, and all the world appeared to have forsaken her but this generous poet, sent him from her prison 2,000 crowns and a silver vase from her toilet, on which she had written,

“A Ronsard, l'Apollon de la source des Muses.”

There was also another who, from motives less generous and unselfish, was deeply interested in the fate of Mary. This was the unfortunate Duke of Norfolk, who, impelled by mingled motives,—by personal ambition, by his religious feelings or prejudices, by his admiration and pity for the imprisoned queen,—engaged himself in various plots for her deliverance, which ended in his own destruction. Norfolk, though generous and brave, appears to have been a weak man. He had not sufficient talent or strength of character to play the daring part assigned to him. He vacillated; would have been great, “but was too full o’ the milk of human kindness to catch the nearest way.” He was betrayed by one of his own servants, tried for high treason, condemned, and executed. When the news of his arraignment and condemnation was brought to Sheffield Castle, where Mary then resided, she abandoned herself to grief, and wept most bitterly, exclaiming “that all who had ever loved her fared the worse for her sake.” Lady Shrewsbury, by way of comfort, argued that the duke was justly condemned; on which Mary gave way to a fresh burst of sorrow, but would talk no more on the subject, and refused to leave her chamber for a week.*

Elizabeth, though anxious to implicate Mary in all the guilt of Norfolk, could not succeed in fixing any imputation on her beyond that of seizing with avidity any means which offered for her deliverance from her hateful captivity. This Mary freely acknowledged; but as to being privy to any plot against the life or throne of Elizabeth, she constantly and strenuously denied every intention of the kind.

Apparently the health of Mary declined, from the want of exercise and the dampness of the prisons in which she was confined; she suffered, too, from constant pain in her side,

* *Vide* Letter from Sir Ralph Sadler to Lord Burleigh, in Ellis's Collection, vol. ii. p. 329.

and rheumatism and weakness in her limbs.* From Tutbury, where she spent, with few changes, nearly sixteen years, she was removed to Chartley, under the care of Sir Amias Paulet and Sir Drue Drury; and thence to Fotheringay, whither she was carried in 1586.

But where, during this long period of suffering, was the only son of Mary—he who in duty and affection should have stood forward to protect and defend her? To her other sorrows was added his coldness, his ingratitude, and his undutifulness; and it was the most bitter of all. He had been brought up to contemn and detest his mother; to regard her with selfish fear, as one who might deprive him of his throne; and when Mary sent him a present of a vest embroidered with her own hands, accompanied by a tender letter, and some jewels which remained in her possession, all were returned to her with disdain, and the messenger refused even an audience, because his mother, never having relinquished her own rights, addressed him as the *Prince*, and not as the King of Scotland.†

Her chief enemies all passed away from the earth during her long imprisonment; and, if it had been in her nature, she might have rejoiced to see that each found a fitting doom. The crafty and relentless Murray was assassinated with vengeful and cunning ferocity, by one who had received a private injury, not from Murray himself, but one of his followers; the fierce and cruel Morton perished on a scaffold; the acute, subtle, and accomplished Maitland ended all his politic intrigues with self-murder,—he poisoned himself; and Bothwell, that fiend in human shape, after being hunted as an outlaw from place to place, became a pirate on the North

* “To this state of suffering and disease we must add, that the economy of Elizabeth did not permit to her, who had once been a queen, the accommodations which are furnished in modern hospitals to invalids of the meanest order.”—*Vide* Sir Walter Scott’s *History of Scotland*, ii. 267.

† It is even said that when Courcelles, the French minister at the Scottish court, endeavoured to rouse James to some vigorous measure for his mother’s safety, he replied with a coarseness and a calmness equally characteristic, “that as she brewed, she must drink.”—Bethune. (*See* Miss Benger’s *Life of Mary*, ii. p. 450.

seas, was taken prisoner, thrown into a dungeon in the castle of Malmoe in Norway, where, after ten years' misery, he died in a state of mental derangement, forsaken, detested, and even forgotten, by all.

During sixteen years no plots had been formed against Elizabeth in which Mary was not supposed to be implicated; in fact, while she existed, Elizabeth was stretched upon the rack of fear and suspicion, and even went the length of tampering with some of her officers to induce them to assassinate Mary: this is, unhappily, proved beyond dispute. At last, an infamous law was made by the English Parliament for the purpose of entrapping her, and which declared, not only the conspirators themselves, but those persons (however innocent or ignorant of their purpose) in whose cause they conspired, as equally guilty of treason: a law of such barefaced injustice, we can but wonder that an English Parliament should be found to promulgate it. By this law Mary was tried, as consenting to Babington's plot, in 1586; and by this law was she condemned, by a bench of judges, consisting of twenty-eight English peers, and seventeen other persons, illustrious either by birth or office, and "all honourable men." Notwithstanding her admirable defence, in which, though broken in health and spirits, she exhibited as much vigour and dignity of mind, and acuteness of intellect, as she had ever displayed when in possession of youth, health, and power, a sentence, universally acknowledged to be unjust and iniquitous, was pronounced against her; and but three months were suffered to elapse between the verdict and the execution. Elizabeth was anxious to ascertain how far she might proceed with safety to herself; and finding that all those who were most bound to befriend, to protect, or to avenge Mary, were too much engrossed by their own selfish interests to stir in her behalf, she hesitated no longer.

On Tuesday, the 7th of February, 1587, the warrant for the death of the Queen of Scots was brought down to Fotheringay by the Earls of Shrewsbury and Kent, who were commissioned to see it put into execution. In the afternoon of that day it was intimated to her, for the first time, that she was to die the next morning; her attendants burst into lamentations,

and she appeared herself a little surprised at the suddenness of the news, and the short time allowed her for preparation. She, however, very calmly expressed her submission to the will of God, and her readiness to die, at the same time protesting most solemnly against the injustice of her sentence. The moment the two earls withdrew, she fell on her knees and thanked God "that her sufferings were now so near an end, and prayed that she might be enabled to endure what yet remained with decency and with fortitude." She afterwards spent great part of the night in arranging her affairs, and making her last will, which is still extant, and consists of four pages, closely written, in a neat and firm hand. Not one person was forgotten who had any claims on her gratitude or her remembrance. She also wrote several letters : but these, it is said, are blotted with her tears. She supped with cheerfulness, and drank to her attendants in a last cup of wine, who pledged her on their knees, while bathed in tears. She then went to bed, and either slept, or seemed to sleep, for a few hours. Next morning, at eight o'clock, all was ready, and Mary, after spending some time in fervent devotion, descended to the hall in which the scaffold was prepared. She was in full dress, habited in a robe of black silk, bordered with crimson velvet, and a long veil of white crape, edged with lace ; she wore a rich chain round her neck, and held in her hand a small ivory crucifix. She walked into the hall, leaning on the arm of her physician Bourgoigne, and took her seat, while the Dean of Peterborough began a long exhortation, to which she paid little attention, praying aloud, and according to the forms of her own church. She requested that some of her female attendants might be allowed to perform the last offices about her person. This was at first refused ; but she represented so earnestly the indignity and indelicacy of suffering her to die surrounded by men only, that at length they consented for very shame. Two of her maids unrobed her : as she had answered for their self-possession, they restrained their cries and tears, but trembled so violently that they could scarcely stand. Mary remained perfectly calm ; her colour did not change, her voice did not falter ; there was no defiance or effort in her deportment, but the

utmost modesty and meekness, united to the utmost firmness. When she had finished her devotions, in which she prayed audibly for Elizabeth, she quietly prepared for death. Jane Kennedy (who was still with her) performed the last sad office of binding her eyes; she then laid her head upon the block, saying, with a firm voice, "O Lord, in Thee have I hoped, and into Thy hands I commit myself!" One of the executioners, a barbarian well chosen for such a purpose, performed his office; the other lifted up the severed head by the hair, and cried out "God save Elizabeth, Queen of England!"—the Earl of Kent and the Dean of Peterborough responded, "Thus perish all her enemies!"—the rest of the spectators, overcome with horror, pity, and admiration, remained silent, drowned in tears.

Mary Stuart perished at the age of forty-four years and two months, and in the nineteenth year of her sad captivity. Her life had been most unfortunate: her death, though tragical, can hardly be called *unfortunate*, since it removed her from a state of suffering to a better world; and since the piety, fortitude, and sublime resignation she displayed on this occasion have furnished her defenders with one strong presumptive proof of her general innocence.

Her remains were taken from her weeping servants, and a green cloth, torn in haste from an old billiard-table, was flung over her once beautiful form: thus it remained, unwatched and unattended, except by a poor little lapdog, which could not be induced to quit the body of its mistress.* After the lapse of a few days, she was interred, by Elizabeth's order, in the cathedral of Peterborough; and on the accession of her son to the English crown, as James I., her remains were brought to Westminster Abbey, where they repose among the sovereigns of her race.

The striking similarity between the character and fate of Mary of Scotland and Joanna of Naples has frequently been alluded to; but the parallel has never, I believe, been closely

* This faithful little animal was found dead two days afterwards; and the circumstance made such an impression, even on the hard-hearted ministers of Elizabeth, that it was mentioned in the official despatches.

and regularly drawn, and it presents a series of very curious coincidences.

Both were from their birth destined to a throne ; both were called to reign in early youth ; both were highly and equally gifted by Nature, in mind and in person ; both beautiful, and even resembling each other in the character of beauty attributed to each ; both were remarkable for a love of pleasure, a taste for magnificence, and an early predilection for literature and learned men. If Mary was the more accomplished of the two, it was because she lived in more favourable times, and her education took place under more favourable auspices. She loved poetry, and patronised Ronsard, the best poet of his time. The court of Joanna was graced by Petrarch, one of the greatest poets of any age. Joanna left many monuments of her splendid taste ; for she had enjoyed, in the midst of tumults and reverses, some intervals of tranquillity, and reigned thirty years. Mary's short and unquiet reign did not permit her to leave any lasting memorials of her splendour or her beneficence, and what she might or would have done must be left to conjecture.

Mary and Joanna were both married in their infancy, and without their own choice, to men far inferior to themselves, both in mental powers and personal accomplishments. Andreas of Hungary was brought to Naples to be educated with his future bride ; and Mary was sent to Paris to be educated with her future husband. According to some historians, Andreas appears to have greatly resembled Francis in his disposition ; they describe him as timid, deficient in intellect, but good-natured and affectionate : according to other writers, he united all the deficiencies of Francis to all the vices of Darnley. Both queens have been accused as accessory to a husband's murder, under circumstances nearly similar, and on very uncertain and contradictory evidence. The marriage of Joanna with Louis of Taranto, who had been suspected of conspiracy against her former husband, had nearly proved as fatal in its consequences as Mary's union with Bothwell, and exposed her to the same dishonourable imputations.

The marriage of Joanna with Louis caused a rebellion among her subjects, and her own banishment from her kingdom for

several years. Mary's precipitate union with Bothwell likewise gave her subjects an excuse for rebellion, and banished her from her kingdom for ever.

Louis of Hungary, with his open violence and secret treachery, his ceaseless machinations and deadly irreconcilable hatred, played the same part in the history of Joanna that Elizabeth enacted in that of Mary. There is reason to imagine that the idea of the black banner, painted with the murder of Darnley, which Mary's rebel subjects paraded before her eyes at Carberry Hill, was suggested by the terrific banner of the King of Hungary, borne before him when he invaded Naples, and on which was represented the murder of Andreas: the coincidence would otherwise be almost incredible.

The state of Naples in the reign of Joanna, the power and ferocity of the feudal barons, the uncivilized condition and factious spirit of the populace, remind us strongly of the situation of Scotland when Mary succeeded to her hereditary crown; and both Joanna and Mary, as women, appear to have been strangely misplaced in the barbarous times in which they lived. Mary, a queen, in her own capital, saw David Rizzio stabbed almost before her eyes, powerless to save him. Joanna, in her own palace, beheld her seneschal, her nurse Philippa, and her friend Sancha dragged from her side to perish in tortures. In both instances it happened that these circumstances of horror took place when Mary and Joanna were each on the point of becoming a mother; in both instances their condition, their entreaties, and their tears failed to procure either forbearance or compassion from the savages who outraged them.

But by far the most striking coincidence is the similarity in character, conduct, and fate, between the Earl of Murray and Charles of Durazzo. Both were remarkable for talents and accomplishments, equally skilled in war, in policy, and intrigue; both were valiant, crafty, ambitious. Murray was the brother of Queen Mary; had been distinguished by her with boundless confidence and affection, and in the beginning of her reign had been loaded with benefits, and promoted to offices of the highest trust and power. Joanna had taken Charles of Durazzo under her protection when an orphan,

had adopted and cherished him as a son, and married him to her heiress. Murray plotted with Elizabeth to dethrone his sister and sovereign, and built his power on her ruin; Durazzo, with treachery and ingratitude yet more flagitious and detestable, joined with Louis of Hungary, and first dethroned, then murdered, his benefactress. Within a short time afterwards, Durazzo was himself murdered by a woman; and Murray, within a few years after his accession to power, perished, if not by the hand or act of a woman, yet the wrongs of a woman inspired and armed his assassin.

Both Mary and Joanna owed their chief troubles and final ruin to a religious schism; they both refused in their latter years to purchase freedom and life by relinquishing their regal dignity; both died in prison, and by violence. The imprisonment of Mary was long and cruel, and a sore trial of her fortitude. On the other hand, the captivity of Joanna was short, but her death horrible to the imagination,—mysterious, frightful, unseen, unpitied, and executed by vile hands. She perished as a victim; Mary like a martyr: by vile hands indeed, and viler practice, but with friendly hearts near her, and all Europe looking on to admire, to applaud, and to bewail her.



QUEEN ELIZABETH.

BEFORE we enter on the reign and character of Elizabeth, it is proper to say a few words of her sister and predecessor Mary, who governed England as sovereign in her own right during five years, that is from 1553 to 1558.

Mary Tudor, the daughter of Henry VIII. and Catherine of Arragon, succeeded to the throne on the death of her amiable brother Edward VI. The innocent and accomplished Lady Jane Grey had borne the empty title of Queen of England for ten days only, and expiated that involuntary and short-lived exaltation by a violent death at the age of seventeen. Mary was in her thirty-ninth year when she ascended the throne. Her reign presents a dark and repulsive page in our history, a series of conspiracies, factions, executions, domestic miseries, and national disgraces. Her character was like her government, gloomy, tyrannical, and sanguinary. We are told of the "sweet uses of adversity;" but the effect of adversity on Mary's mind was to harden and embitter a disposition naturally reserved and haughty. The persecutions and vexations she had endured in the reigns of her father and brother, on account of her adherence to the Romish faith, had taught her to vex and to persecute others. Her sour temper rendered her one of the most unhappy princesses that ever lived, for she was unhappy within herself, as well as from external mortifications and reverses; and her whole life seems to present the lingering torment of a sullen, jealous, irritable disposition, for ever preying on itself. The picture of atrocious cruelty and suffering

exhibited by the martyrdoms of her reign is unrelieved, except by a sense of painful interest, and admiration for the sufferers who died with such sublime fortitude; but as they endured torments, so did Mary inflict them,—*for conscience' sake*. This wretched woman was rather the perverted instrument of evil, than evil in herself; what she perpetrated was not in fear or revenge, or from any personal motives, but from blinded zeal, and the idea that she was acting for the glory of God and religion. She executed these barbarities with such a frightful coolness and unconsciousness, that we regard her with the same kind of horror with which we look on some passive engine of torture,—some wooden rack or wheel stained with innocent blood. Yet Mary, though a remorseless bigot, was not in her nature a wicked woman: she had strong affections, she had uprightness of purpose, and a high sense of her own and the nation's honour.

The principal events of her short reign were, the burning of the Bishops Ridley, Latimer, Cranmer, and about two hundred others—scenes on which we will not dwell, for we may thank God that in these more enlightened times such agonizing details are no longer necessary either as example or warning; the queen's marriage with Philip II. of Spain, whom she deeply loved, and who in return neglected and despised her; and the loss of Calais. This town, the last of the English possessions in France, was taken from us in her reign by the famous Duc de Guise, and Mary never recovered this stain on the national honour. She died broken-hearted, leaving a name linked with the most horrible associations, and doomed to bear through future ages the most frightful cognomen ever bestowed by vulgar hatred, or deserved by human guilt,—that of BLOODY MARY!

Far different were the destinies of her renowned sister;—she who was prosperous in her life, and since her death has been exalted by historical flattery, and consecrated to popular veneration, as “GOOD QUEEN BESS.”

Elizabeth Tudor, the daughter of Henry VIII. and Ann Boleyn, was born at Greenwich in 1533: she ascended the throne of England in 1558, being then in her twenty-fifth year, and died in 1603, after a reign of forty-four years and some months;

comprising an era of unexampled interest, not only in the history of nations, but in the history of the human intellect. It was an age in some respects resembling our own ; a period not only fertile in great events, but in great men : it was the age of heroism and genius, of wonderful mental activity, extraordinary changes, and daring enterprises, of fierce struggles for religious or political freedom. It produced a Shakspeare, the first of poets ; Bacon, the great philosopher ; Hooker, the great divine ; Drake, the great seaman, and the first of our circumnavigators ; Gresham, the great merchant ; and Sidney, noblest of courtiers ; and Spenser, and Raleigh, and Essex, names renowned in history and song. In other countries we find Luther, the Reformer ; Sully, the statesman ; Ariosto and Tasso ; Cervantes and Camöens ; Michael Angelo, Titian, and Correggio ; Palestrina, the father of Italian music : all these, and many other famous men, never since surpassed, were nearly contemporary. It was an age of greatness, and our Elizabeth was great and illustrious in connexion with it.

To separate the personal from the political history of Elizabeth would not be difficult ; but it would give a very unjust and imperfect idea of her character. The political events of her reign were of that magnitude and importance, that to give a distinct and intelligible account of them would require not pages but volumes ; while merely to mention them in the order in which they occurred would convey no *new* information to the readers of this little book. It is supposed that they have already obtained from those histories of England which are generally read at an early age a knowledge of the chief events of Elizabeth's life, and the striking points in her character. Almost from our infancy, we have a general impression that her reign is distinguished as one of the most memorable in history ; and, at a later period, we hear of the "Elizabethan age," as equally illustrious in the annals of our literature. Her wisdom, her courage, her prudence, and her patriotism ; her unconquerable spirit, her excellent laws and vigilant government ; her successes at home and abroad, her wars and her alliances with the greatest and most powerful princes of her time ; the magnificent position which England maintained in her reign, as the stronghold of the Reformed religion ;

her own grandeur as the guardian of the Protestants, and the arbitress of Europe ; her magnanimous stand in defence of the national faith and independence, when the Spanish Armada was defeated in 1588 ; the long list of great men, warriors, statesmen, and poets who sustained her throne, who graced her court, obeyed her slightest word, lived in her smiles, and " worshipped as she passed : " all these things are familiar to young people almost from the time they can remember, and they leave a strong and magnificent impression on the fancy. As we grow older and become acquainted with the particular details of history, we begin to perceive with surprise that this splendid array of great names and great achievements has another and a far different aspect. On looking nearer, we behold on the throne of England a woman whose avarice and jealousy, whose envious, relentless, and malignant spirit, whose coarse manners and violent temper, rendered her detestable ; whose pedantry and meanness, whose childish vanity and intense selfishness, rendered her contemptible. We see England, the country of Freedom, ruled as absolutely as any Turkish province by this imperious Sultana and her Grand Vizier Burleigh ; we see human blood poured out like water on the scaffold, and persecution, torture, and even death, again inflicted for the sake of religion ; we see great men, whose names are the glory of their country, pining in neglect, and a base, unworthy favourite revelling in power. We read and learn these things with astonishment : we find it difficult to reconcile such apparent contradictions, and are at a loss to conceive whence they could have arisen, and how they could ever have existed. It will therefore be something new and amusing to endeavour to explain and account for them in a clear and comprehensive manner.

Within the century immediately preceding the reign of Elizabeth, occurred the three greatest events which, since the Redemption of mankind, have taken place in this our world : the invention of printing took place about 1448 ; the discovery of America in 1492 ; and the Reformation in 1517. The first, by rendering knowledge more accessible, prepared the way for the two last ; and Luther, when he plunged into a sea of difficulties and dangers, to bring to light the errors of the

Church of Rome, was as bold a man as Columbus, when he launched on the wide Atlantic in search of unknown worlds. The Reformation and the discovery of America were destined to produce a wonderful and beneficial effect on posterity ; yet the immediate result of both was similar and sad : both began by causing much crime, and bloodshed, and strife betwixt man and man, at the same time that they roused and called into action energies hitherto unknown. The first wild, agitating ferment was beginning to subside into a bold, settled activity, and the light which had been struggling through clouds of violence and ignorance, began to shine forth with a steady splendour, when Elizabeth, under happy and glorious auspices, ascended the throne, and being thus, by position and accident, a conspicuous person in an illustrious age, what wonder is it that a part of its glory fell upon her, as the most prominent objects catch and reflect most brightly the light around them ?

RELIGION.—During the life of her sister Mary Elizabeth was suspected of favouring the Reformed doctrines ; but she outwardly conformed herself to all the ceremonies of the Romish Church, and she afterwards gave sufficient proof, that in her secret soul she was no more of a real Protestant than her father. When she first came to the throne, she had not, apparently, decided on the course she was to pursue in matters of religion. She sent the usual dutiful notification of her accession to the Court of Rome ; and had the reigning Pontiff returned a benignant answer, there is no knowing what might have been the consequences, at least for the time : but Paul IV. (Caraffa), an arrogant, fiery-spirited old man, assumed on this occasion a tone which he thought became the infallible representative of St. Peter. He thundered forth his displeasure at her presumption, in daring to assume the crown of England without his permission, and commanded her to submit herself to the Holy See, on pain of excommunication. Elizabeth, never inclined to submit, was alarmed and disgusted. She immediately took the title of Head of the Church, to the great scandal of the Roman Catholics, and, it may be added, to the great scandal of all religion, considering her sex, her age, and the power she took upon herself at so critical a period. Thenceforward she was resolved to allow no foreign interference in religious affairs ; and

there she was right : but neither would she admit of advice from the wise, aged, learned, and virtuous ecclesiastics of her own kingdom ; and here she was wrong, unwise, and presumptuous. The dangers to which she was subjected from her defiance of the Pope, and the resolute spirit with which she met and repelled them, where the foundation of her popularity ; so that she was regarded as the heroine of the English Church, and her accession was long celebrated by the people as “the birthday of the Gospel.”* But assuredly no thought of the Gospel, and its pure and humble principles of action, entered into Elizabeth’s mind in regulating the faith of her subjects. That she had not the slightest idea of toleration in such matters is not surprising, since it is only lately that people have begun to understand and practise it : but her audacity was really extraordinary. She told the Archbishop of Canterbury that she would allow of no deviation from her will, and that “she was resolved that no man should be suffered to decline either on the left or the right hand from the drawn line limited by her authority and injunctions.”†

In pursuance of this plan, she persecuted both the Roman Catholics and the stricter Protestants (then first called *Puritans*) with the most relentless vigour. Two persons were burned in Smithfield ; many suffered other infamous and cruel punishments. In the course of fourteen years only it appears that sixty-one clergymen, forty-seven laymen, and two gentlewomen suffered death on account of religion ; and many thousands endured imprisonment, exile, fines, and other miseries.

This odious and short-sighted method of repressing religious differences had the usual effect. Elizabeth’s excessive severity against the Puritans increased so much the number and strength of that sect, that forty years after the death of Elizabeth they hurled Charles the First from his throne, and shook the throne itself to its foundations. But the queen could not dream of such a consummation : though her wisdom was great, it was confined within a narrow circle by self-will and selfishness. She was guided by expediency, not by the love of

* Miss Aikin, i. p. 320, et seq.

† Hume, v. 454, Appendix.

truth.* She would allow no innovations in religion but just those which were necessary to separate her effectually from all dependence on the authority of the Roman Church ; because her own political existence as a sovereign, nay her very life, depended on this : but all her feelings and despotic prejudices were on the side of the old religion. Thus, she was most impatient of preachers and preaching. She said "two or three were enough for a whole country." She was an enemy to sermons, and was known to call out in her chapel and command the preacher to quit a subject that was disagreeable, or an exhortation too bold. She was with difficulty persuaded to allow the communion-table to be substituted for the high altar and crucifix ; and when the theatres were first licensed, plays were permitted only on the Sunday, which was then a festival, and not a Sabbath. She hated that the clergy should be married, and openly insulted the wife of Archbishop Parker. The archbishop had been chaplain to her mother, Anne Boleyn : and there was nothing in which Elizabeth displayed more good sense and good feeling, than in the favour she showed to all the relations and friends of her unfortunate mother ; at the same time that she refrained from bringing forward the question of her divorce, and buried in silence all that could reflect on the memory of her father. Parker was distinguished by her in the beginning of her reign, and she frequently visited him at his palace at Lambeth. On one of these occasions, when she had been feasted with particular splendour by the archbishop and his wife, she thanked the former with many gracious expressions ; then turning to Mrs. Parker, "And you," said she : "*Madam* I may not call you ; *Mistress* I am ashamed to call you ; so I know not what to call you ; but yet I do thank you." Parker himself ended his life in disgrace, because he was not sufficiently subservient to her will. Archbishop Grindal, a most conscientious and worthy prelate, ventured to remonstrate against her religious despotism as unbecoming, and too remind her that she too was accountable to God, and ought not to take upon herself to decide points better left to the management of the bishops. Elizabeth was

* Aikin, i. 319.

furious: the good archbishop remained in disgrace, and was forbidden to exercise the duties of his office. The anger of Elizabeth continued for five years, during which the prelate was suspended and banished from the court; and then the old man, growing blind, resigned his dignity, and retired: he died in 1583. Elizabeth was then resolved to choose an Archbishop of Canterbury who would neither interfere with her nor control her. She raised Whitgift to that dignity, a man of a severe and tyrannical spirit, whose sentiments and views agreed with her own. A court called the "High Commission" exercised the same kind of jurisdiction in the reign of Elizabeth as the dreadful Inquisition in Spain. It was a court instituted to take cognizance of all religious delinquencies, heresy, and contumacy; and its measures were, in reality, quite as arbitrary, though its punishments were neither so cruel, nor so secret, nor so numerous, as those of the Roman Catholic tribunal.

GOVERNMENT.—It must be admitted that Elizabeth's foreign policy, her wars, treaties, and alliances with the states of Europe, was most admirably managed; and, in particular, the principle of never making war but in self-defence cannot be too highly praised; and though it has been asserted that she adhered to this principle from avarice or policy, rather than from Christian or feminine feeling, yet let her have all the commendation she deserves for bequeathing to posterity the proof and the example that sovereigns may obtain the highest respect and renown without aspiring to conquest, and leading armies to invade and rob their neighbours. Another characteristic of Elizabeth's government at home and abroad was its consistency. She was not in the habit of changing her ministers and counsellors with every change of public opinion; there was no going in or out of office on slight occasions. The same men served her in the same capacities nearly through her reign, and this gave extraordinary stability to all her purposes. Lord Burleigh was her Prime Minister for forty years. His son, Robert Cecil, Walsingham, Throckmorton, and Davison, Secretaries; Sir Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer: Sir Francis Knolles, Sir Nicholas Bacon, and his son, Francis Bacon, were among the most remarkable and influential of the

statesmen of her time. It is true that Sir Christopher Hatton owed his rise to his graceful person, and his skill in dancing ; and that Leicester was indebted for her favour merely to his superficial accomplishments : these, however, were among the few exceptions. In general she was not governed by caprice in the choice of her ministers, and they were as faithful to her as she was steady to them.

Her chief foreign enemy was Philip the Second, who had married her sister, and afterwards wished to marry herself. Him, though he wielded the power and resources of half the known world, she defied from her little kingdom, and was uniformly successful against him. She assisted the Dutch in their war against the Spanish tyranny ; though when at first they sought her help, and offered her the sovereignty of the Low Countries, she refused them in terms of contempt, telling them it was unreasonable to have stirred up so great a commotion merely on account of the mass, and upbraiding them with their rebellion. But she afterwards redeemed herself nobly and wisely, for she found it more politic to combat Philip the Second in Holland than on the soil of her native England. The whole history of this war of liberty against despotism is most interesting, and many of Elizabeth's bravest commanders and most accomplished courtiers distinguished themselves in it, particularly Sir Philip Sidney (who perished at Zutphen), Peregrine Bertie, Lord Willoughby, and Sir Francis Vere. Holland became, in fact, a school of arms for the young nobility. As to Elizabeth's conduct in Scotland and Ireland, it may truly be said that her policy towards Scotland was the most perfidious, and towards Ireland the most atrociously cruel and impolitic, that ever was pursued by any Christian sovereign. She hated the latter country, because she derived no revenue from it, and it was a constant source of trouble and expense to her ; no measures but those of extreme rigour were resorted to ; and accordingly, during her whole reign, we find Ireland a scene of frightful contests and mutual massacre. "The English," says Hume, "instead of inviting the Irish to adopt the more civilized customs of their conquerors, even refused, though earnestly solicited, to communicate to them the privilege of their laws, and everywhere marked them out as aliens and as

enemies. Thrown out of the protection of justice, the natives could find no security but in force ; and flying the neighbourhood of cities, which they could not approach with safety, they sheltered themselves in their marshes and forests from the insolence of their inhuman masters. Being treated like wild beasts, they became such ; and joining the ardour of revenge to their untamed barbarity they grew every day more intractable and more dangerous.*

The Lord-Deputy (as the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland was called in those days) had a most difficult part to act. All Elizabeth's generals and courtiers abhorred the Irish service, for it procured them neither thanks nor reputation. They never could succeed in pleasing their imperious mistress, who demanded unrelenting rigour on their part, and the slightest remissness of severity was construed into high treason. If the revenue fell short, she swore at them all for "idle knaves ;" and the discussion of the Irish affairs was sure to produce a fit of ill temper. The most celebrated of these deputies were, Sir Henry Sidney ; Lord Gray ; Walter, Earl of Essex ; and Sir John Perrot. Sir John, who was the most enlightened and humane of them all, had nearly been brought to the block in consequence of his Irish administration. The young favourite Essex, and the gallant Lord Mountjoy, also commanded in Ireland, much to their own discontent, and not much to the content of their queen.

As for the domestic government of Elizabeth, it was prudent, firm, and vigilant, on the principle of self-preservation and self-interest, rather than of enlightened benevolence. To increase her revenues, to increase her power, to govern without a parliament, to preserve the country from all enemies without, and her throne and person from all enemies within,—these were the principles on which she acted, and these the ends she pursued. But to spread instruction among her subjects, to extend freedom, to "scatter blessings round the land,"—these formed no part of her plan. She referred everything to *self*. Her best qualities fitted her to take the helm of government in times when it required a strong hand to grasp the sceptre. She was

* Hume, v. 396.

at once fearless and cautious, firm and artful, frugal and ostentatious : she could trample down pride, repel presumption, retort insult, and defy danger. But when did she comfort or help the weak-hearted ? or raise up the fallen ? or exalt humble merit ? or cherish unobtrusive genius ? or spare the offending ? or pardon the guilty ? The numbers that perished in her reign for high treason exceed belief ; nor is it necessary to shock the young reader with the details : it is sufficient just to mention that eight hundred persons were hanged after the " Rising in the North."* Yet Elizabeth did not think that due severity had been exercised ; and the Earl of Sussex, who commanded there, complains of the " hangman's office" to which he had been called, and the difficulty of giving content at court. If the horrid butchering barbarity of some of these executions, as those of Arden, Tichborne, and the Babingtons, be imputed to the times, it shows that Elizabeth's humanity, like her wisdom, could not go beyond that of the age in which she lived. In spite of her just and real popularity plots, conspiracies, revolts were of constant recurrence ; and we find the noblest families of that time, the Howards, Fitzalans, Percies, Nevils, Pagets, with their adherents, suffering for high treason, and constantly in open or secret rebellion against her.

Of her arbitrary power, and the extent of her prerogative, some instances are amusing, some astonishing, some disgusting. It was allowed in parliament " that she was *absolute*—that she had the power to release herself from any law—that she was a species of Divinity."† Her *proclamation*—that is, the public expression of her royal will—was equal in effect to the law of the land. By one of these proclamations her subjects were forbidden to wear their ruffs more than a quarter of a yard in width, and their rapiers more than a yard long. It was in vain the preachers thundered against the " Devil's kingdom of great ruffs," as it was called in those days ; and Elizabeth, although most partial to this appendage of dress, as we may see from her pictures, was determined not to allow her people to go beyond the degree of extravagance and absurdity she thought becoming to herself. Officers were

* Ilume.

† *Idem*, v. 463—441.

appointed to tear the ruffs and break the rapiers of those who transgressed the queen's edict against them. This reminds us of the Czar Peter shaving off the beards of his loving subjects by means of official barbers.

There is a proclamation inserted in Burney's History of Music, by which any private musician, any singing man or boy who excelled in his art, might be pressed into the service of the Royal Chapel. Another prohibits the cultivation of woad, a plant most useful and valuable in our manufactures, because her Majesty disliked the smell of it. Those and some other acts of capricious power may sound rather ludicrous than terrible, but at the time were productive of much private loss and misery. By another proclamation, if there was an affray or riot in the streets, the provost-marshal might seize an offender, and hang him up without farther trouble.

In Parliament it happened almost every session that members were arrested and sent to the Tower for too great freedom of speech :* and sometimes she would "rate the Commons soundly," and they, like beaten children, submitted ; complimented her on her saving grace and all-preventing goodness, and offered up the "last breath of their nostrils, and the last drop of blood in their hearts, to be breathed forth, to be poured out, for her safety." None of the nobility could marry, and no man could travel out of England, without the royal permission. These prerogatives were claimed both by her predecessors and successors, but were exercised by Elizabeth with peculiar rigour in many cases. Lord Hertford was imprisoned during nine years for contracting a marriage displeasing to her.† The accomplished Earl of Southampton

* Hume, v. 463.

† With Lady Catherine Grey, younger sister of Lady Jane Grey, and, after her death, the heiress of her pretensions to the Crown ; which was enough to awaken Elizabeth's jealousy. The history of Lord and Lady Hertford is a complete romance, and a very tragical one : it may be found briefly related in Hume ; more at length in Miss Aikin's Memoirs of Queen Elizabeth ; and in Ellis's Collection are several letters from or concerning this most unfortunate Lady Catherine, some of which cannot be perused without the most painful compassion, mingled with horror of that tyrannous abuse of power and selfish

for four years intreated permission to marry Elizabeth Vernon, a beautiful girl of the court, and cousin to his friend Lord Essex. The queen could not be induced to consent: and when, wearied by this tyranny, they had recourse to a secret marriage, she caused them to be separated, and sent to the Tower for several months. Many other instances of the same kind of petty and vexatious despotism and envious temper might easily be enumerated.

COMMERCE.—Manufactures, trade, and navigation made great progress in Elizabeth's reign; but her encouragement of commerce went no farther than the mere improvement of her revenues by the shortest means, and these means were so far from being beneficial in themselves, or worthy of a wise and enlightened sovereign, that they strike us as exceedingly barbarous.* For instance, she would sell to certain individuals the privilege of dealing in some particular commodity; and for any other person to sell it was as illegal as smuggling is now. This was called a monopoly. It was as if, in these days, one individual alone had a right to sell sugar, and all other persons were obliged to go to his shop and buy it of him at any price he might choose to put on it. But in Elizabeth's time there were monopolies of salt, coals, iron, lead, and tin, oil and vinegar, glass, brushes, beer, wine, leather; in short, fifty or sixty articles among the comforts, and even necessities, of life, which were thus in the hands of one dealer, who could alone supply all others. To Lord Essex the queen gave the monopoly of wines. It should be observed, that not only the high prices of these things thus became a great hardship, and discouraged the use of them, but the right of the monopolist to search the houses of those who were suspected of having these commodities illegally gave rise to the most intolerable private and public oppression

cruelty of which she was the victim. She died broken-hearted in consequence of the unrelenting rigour of Elizabeth and her long separation from her husband, entreating with her last breath that the queen would graciously "send liberty to him, as the only thing that could alleviate his sorrow for her loss." Lord Hertford was not liberated till five years after her death.

* Hume, v. 477.

ever known in a country which had the least pretensions to be called *free*. The grandest of these monopolies, that of the East India Company, by which a certain set of persons had the exclusive right of trading to certain countries, has lasted to our time.

The religious persecutions in France and the Netherlands induced many manufacturers in woollen and cutlery to settle here. Elizabeth generously and wisely encouraged them; and we date the rise of our manufactures from her reign. Spilman set up the first paper-mill at Dartford, in 1590. Watches and coaches were first introduced. It appears that the first coach was brought from Holland by William Boonen, a Dutchman, in 1564, who was Queen Elizabeth's coachman. "And, indeed," says a contemporary, "a coach was a strange monster in those days, and the sight of it put both horse and man into amazement. Some said it was a great crab-shell brought out of China; and some imagined it to be one of the pagan temples in which the cannibals adored the devil." But, in spite of these strange doubts and fears, the use of coaches soon became general, and even (as it was deemed) "excessive and superfluous." When we hear of Elizabeth riding to the House of Peers on a pillion in the beginning of her reign, we should not forget that towards the end of it she is represented as taking an airing in her coach every day.

The trade with Turkey and Russia first began in the reign of Elizabeth; she was the first sovereign who sent ambassadors to these courts.

The trade to the Mediterranean and Levant was also carried on to a great extent, and was the means of introducing into England the common use of luxuries and conveniences before unknown. Mirrors and drinking-glasses from Venice were now met with in the citizens' houses; but it was regarded as a piece of splendour truly royal when Elizabeth ordered her bath-room at Windsor to be wainscotted with Venetian looking-glass. The first porcelain seen in England was the cargo of a Spanish carrack, taken on its return from the East Indies, and it excited great admiration. The use of damask table-linen was introduced about the same time from Holland: before that time tables were covered with woollen carpets or

tapestry, such as we see in the old pictures. In the midst of these improvements and luxuries, the use of *forks* remained unknown, and Queen Elizabeth ate with her fingers.*

It is the vulgar idea that Elizabeth's maids of honour breakfasted on beefsteaks and ale, and that wine was such a rarity as to be sold only by apothecaries as a cordial. The *science* of good living was as well understood in those days as it is now, though the *fashion* might be somewhat different. The nobility had French cooks, and among the dishes enumerated we find "not only beef, mutton, veal, lamb, kid, pork, rabbit, capon, pig," but also red or fallow deer, and great variety of fish and wild fowl, with pastry and creams, Italian confections, and preserved fruits, and sweetmeats from Portugal; nay, we are even told of cherries served up at "twenty shillings a pound."† The variety of wines can hardly be exceeded even at present; for a writer of Elizabeth's time mentions fifty-six different kinds of French wine, and thirty-six Spanish and Italian wines imported into England. Dainties for the table were among the offerings which Elizabeth's courtiers and ladies were in the habit of presenting to her; but it is only just to add that she was herself temperate, though nice, in her eating. Her household appears to have been maintained with becoming splendour, and there was in particular a good allowance of wine for the inferior tables.‡

In navigation, almost everything was achieved by private industry and enterprise, though Elizabeth and her government had the glory and the praise. Numbers of noblemen and gentlemen who fitted out vessels at their own expense, either to trade with America and the South of Europe, or to attack the Spaniards, contributed to form excellent sailors, and nourish a spirit of daring enterprise, which prepared the future greatness of our navy. The Earl of Cumberland, Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, Cavendish, Davis (who discovered Davis's Straits),

* The use of forks was first introduced from Italy in the beginning of the next reign, about 1616.

† Drake's Shakespeare, vol. ii. 127 *et seq.*

‡ Towards the latter end of her reign her parsimony seems to have extended even to the details of her household: "At court, ill breeding and *ill feeding*," says the epigrammatic Harrington.

were among the most distinguished of these bold and brave men. Sir Francis Drake was the first commander who sailed entirely round the world; for Magellan, who made the first attempt, died before he had completed the voyage.

LEARNING AND ARTS.—With regard to the state of learning, it has been truly said, that this queen, who understood Latin and Greek, and spoke several languages of Europe, was much fonder of displaying her own learning than encouraging the learned.* But her reign is considered the golden period of our literature; and the English language was then written with such purity, strength, and elegance, that the best writers of that time, as Shakspeare, Bacon, Sidney, Raleigh, Hooker, are now regarded as models of style, and prepared the way for that magnificent standard of our language, the English Bible, which was completed in the next reign. The letters of the unhappy Earl of Essex, though he was no author, are exquisite specimens of style. Queen Elizabeth's own compositions show that she was excelled as a writer by all the leading personages of her court. Some of her short letters have indeed a degree of coarse energy, if that be any merit; but in general her prose is involved, obscure, and stiff, far unlike that of her elegant rival, Mary Stuart, who wrote English well, and whose French style might be taken as a model of the language in those times. Of her verse, a contemporary flatterer assures us that the queen's "learned, delicate, and noble muse easily surmounteth all the rest that have written before her time or since, for sense, sweetness, and subtiltie, be it ode, elegie, epigram, or any other kind of poeme, heroic or lyricke, wherein it shall please her Majesty to employ her penne, even by as much oddes as her own excellent estate and degree exceedeth all the rest of her most humble vassals."† It is worth while to quote a specimen of the contemptible trash on which this eulogium was bestowed. The following lines are the commencement of her best poem:—

"That doubt of future foes exiles my future joy;
And wit me warns to shun such snares as threaten mine annoy:

* Hume.

† Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*.

For Falsehood now doth flow, and subjects' faith doth ebb,
 Which would not be if Reason ruled, or Wisdom weaved the web;
 But clouds of toys untry'd do cloak aspiring minds,
 Which turn to rain, of late repent, by course of changed winds :
 The top of hope suppos'd the root of ruth will be,
 And fruitless all their graffed guiles, as shortly ye shall see." &c. &c.

The treatment which Spenser met with in her court,—Spenser, who exalted her in his "Faery Queen," and celebrated her in strains divine to hear,—is well known: he pined away "with crosses and with cares," and died in neglect and poverty. Raleigh and Sidney had been his patrons, as Essex and Southampton were the friends and patrons of Shakspeare: whatever countenance the queen bestowed on the two greatest men of her time, was through the influence of these favourites.

Music was much in fashion in Elizabeth's court. We are told that most of her ladies "studied prick-song," that is, the theory of music; Elizabeth herself played well on the virginals (a kind of spinet or small harpsichord)—so far, as Camden justly observes, "as might *become* a princess." It appears that she excelled the Queen of Scots on keyed instruments, but Mary played better on the lute. Queen Elizabeth's music-book is still extant, and the pieces contained in it are more remarkable for their difficulty than their beauty. A little instrument called the *gittern*, or *cittern*, which appears to have resembled a small guitar, was in fashion as an accompaniment to the voice. Laneham, one of the courtiers, and a dependent of Lord Leicester, thus describes his own playing on the cittern:—"And to say truth, what with mine eyes, with my Spanish sospires, my French heighos, mine Italian dulcets, my Dutch hoves, my double releas, my high reaches, my fine feigning, my deep diapason, my wanton warbles, my running, my timing, my tuning, and my twinkling, I can gracify the matter as well as the proudest of them."

The principal musician of Elizabeth's time was William Bird, organist of Lincoln, the composer of the beautiful and well-known canon, *Non nobis, Domine*; and it is worthy of remark, that in her reign we find the first introduction of Italian music into England, and the first mention of English words adapted to Italian airs. Church music and the science

of harmony were principally cultivated ; the fashionable style of vocal music was the madrigal for three or four voices, and it was extremely elaborate and artificial. Shakspeare complains that the simple old ballad airs were banished for this new style of Italian music ; at the same time that he appears to have been most sensible to its real beauty. He has celebrated a lutenist of the name of Dowland :

“Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense.”*

There was a collection of songs in praise of Queen Elizabeth, called the “Triumphs of Oriana,” set to music by the most eminent composers of her reign ; and among them we find the name of John Milton, the father of the great poet.

Painting and Architecture received but little patronage in Elizabeth's reign. She was fond of multiplying pictures of herself ; and so far, and no farther, did she encourage painting. One of her most curious and characteristic ordinances is a proclamation prohibiting all manner of persons from drawing, painting, graving, &c., her Majesty's person and visage, till some perfect pattern and example should be prepared by a skilful limner, “for the consolation of her Majesty's loving subjects, who were grieved and took great offence at the errors and deformities committed by sundry persons in this respect.” Yet her painters do not appear to have flattered her as much as her poets.† The portraits remaining of Elizabeth (and they are numerous) show how vile, how tawdry, and how vulgar was her taste in art : they could hardly be fine enough to please her ; they seem all made up of jewels, crowns, and frizzled hair powdered with diamonds, and “ruffs, and cuffs, and farthingales, and things ;” and from the midst of this superfluity of ornament her pinched Roman nose, thin lips, and sharp eyes peer out with a very disagreeable effect, quite contrary to all our ideas of grace or majesty. She was so little capable of judging a work of art, that she would not allow a painter to put any shadows upon the face, “because,” as she said, “shade is an accident, and not in nature ;”—this was like the Chinese who tried to wipe off

* See Shakspeare's Sonnets.

† Walpole.

the shadows from the picture of George the Third, which had been sent out as a present to the Emperor of China, being persuaded, like Queen Elizabeth, that they could only have come there by accident. Yet her reign, destined to be every way illustrious, produced the first native painter of distinguished eminence in Isaac Oliver, one of the most admirable miniature painters who ever existed, for he has not since been surpassed in his own style of art. Frederick Zuccherro, a celebrated Italian painter, visited England in 1574, and painted Elizabeth, Mary, Queen of Scots, who sat to him while in confinement at Hardwicke, and several persons of the court. Hilliard, an English painter, remarkable for the neatness of his execution and total want of taste, was Elizabeth's favourite painter, and she often sat to him. Lucas de Heere, who painted many portraits of her time, was a Fleming. There were no artists of eminence in any department but portrait-painting. Sir Nathaniel Bacon, the brother of the great Lord Bacon, is the first English gentleman on record who cultivated painting as an amateur, that is, merely from a love of the art; and some of his pictures which remain show that he pursued it successfully.

Architecture was even in a worse state than painting, although a mania for building seems to have prevailed among the nobility of that time. The style was magnificent, but the taste ungraceful and barbarous. "In more ancient times," says Walpole, "the mansions of the great lords were built for defence and strength, rather than convenience; the walls thick, the windows pierced wherever it was most necessary for them to look abroad, instead of being contrived for symmetry or to illuminate the chambers. To that style succeeded the richness and delicacy of the Gothic. As this declined, before the Grecian taste was established, space and vastness seem to have made their whole ideas of grandeur. The palaces erected in the reign of Elizabeth by the memorable Countess of Shrewsbury* are exactly in this style. The apartments are lofty and enormous; and they knew not how to furnish them: pictures, had they had good ones, would be

* The same who had the charge of Mary, Queen of Scots: she built Hardwicke, Chatsworth, &c.

lost in chambers of such height; tapestry, their chief moveable, was not commonly perfect enough to be real magnificence; fretted ceilings, graceful mouldings of windows, and painted glass, the ornaments of the preceding age, were fallen into disuse. Immense lights, composed of bad glass in diamond panes, cast an air of poverty on their most costly apartments." The most splendid specimens of this style of architecture remaining to us are: Hardwicke; Burleigh House, the seat of Lord Exeter; Holland House, at Kensington; and Hatfield, the seat of Lord Salisbury. An immense gallery, and vast projecting windows, were the general features of the great mansions erected in this age. John Thorpe was the principal architect. Inigo Jones was born in Elizabeth's reign, but did not rise to any eminence in his profession till some years after her death: he returned from Italy with his imagination full of Michael Angelo and Palladio, and designed the palace of Whitehall.

The grandfather of Elizabeth left us one of the most splendid monuments of Gothic architecture in the kingdom, Henry the Seventh's Chapel at Westminster. Her father founded a college and built a palace. Her brother endowed the finest school and hospital in England, memorials worthy of his amiable character. Elizabeth left behind her no monument of her taste, her munificence, or her benevolence; she left three thousand gowns in her wardrobe.

MORALS AND MANNERS.—With regard to the state of morals and manners in Elizabeth's court, the first were not better, and the latter not worse, than in other courts of that time. The system of corruption was open and gross; for not only favour, but justice, was to be bought and sold. When we read that Lord Bacon was disgraced in the following reign for accepting, or allowing his servants to accept, of bribes in his office, we are at first filled with pity, surprise, and even consternation, that a man so wise and so great, to whom God gave a spirit to comprehend the universe, who was the Columbus of modern philosophy,—that *he* should thus so poorly degrade himself; but we find that in the court in which he was educated and passed his early probation as a statesman it was the common and general practice. Elizabeth

scrupled not to accept of bribes herself to induce her to influence her own counsellors and judges;* and no man thought of furthering a suit at court or at law without a present in his hand. We will give one serious and one amusing instance out of hundreds. The Archbishop of York wished to procure the pardon of an unfortunate man, who (let it be remarked) was innocent. But he petitioned in vain. "And therefore," writes the archbishop, "I, being put in mind that all was not done in that court for God's sake only, sent up twenty French crowns of mine own purse as a small remembrance for a poor man's pardon, which was thankfully accepted of. There is some fault somewhere: I know it is not in her Majesty, of whom I will say, as the prophet David speaketh of God, 'Hath Queen Elizabeth forgotten to be gracious, and is her mercy come to an end for evermore?' The whole world knoweth the contrary." At the time of the date of this letter the good archbishop had been suing this pardon in vain for nine months for a man whose only crime was that he had *once* been a Papist, though now converted and a good Protestant;—and whether the twenty crowns at length availed is not ascertained.

When Sir John Harrington came up to town about a lawsuit, he made a memorandum of the best manner of proceeding. In these days, if a man were going to law about an estate, he would probably go to Lincoln's Inn, choose an acute and eloquent lawyer to manage his case, pay him the proper fee, and leave the rest to the judges. Harrington took a different method. His first care was to please her Majesty in the cut of his coat; for as she had formerly spit on the dress of a courtier which had displeased her, this was of some consequence. He then proceeds: "I must go in an early hour, before her Highness hath special matter brought up to counsel on. I must go before the breakfast covers are placed, and stand uncovered as her Highness cometh forth her chamber, and kneel and say, God save your Majesty! I crave your ear at what hour may suit for your servant to meet your blessed countenance!—thus will I gain her favour to follow to the auditory." He afterwards says in another

* Miss Aikin, ii. p. 408.

place, "Yet I will adventure to give her Majesty five hundred pounds in money, and some pretty jewel or garment, as you shall advise, only praying her Majesty to further my suit with some of her learned counsel." These were some of the means by which people obtained justice in the reign of "Good Queen Bess."

We learn that the daily ceremonial of her court was distinguished by "Oriental servility." Her table was served kneeling, and with as many genuflexions as would have contented the Emperor of China. Even her ministers never addressed her but on their knees : from this slavish ceremony Lord Burleigh was latterly excused, when age and infirmities had rendered it painful, or rather impracticable ; but he was the only exception.

With as much real power, with as much real greatness, as would have satisfied any mortal (but that with power in every shape "*l'appétit vient en mangeant*"), with talents and strength of character that ought to have commanded real and heartfelt respect, Elizabeth would stoop to the most childish rivalry with the women of her own court, and, like a spoiled infant, was miserable unless she were the sole source of all favour, the centre of all attraction, and the object of all adoration. Her maids of honour were sometimes the victims of this petty jealousy, which descended even to dress.

There was among her attendants a young girl of rank (Lady Mary Howard) remarkable for her beauty and her liveliness, who had attracted the notice of Essex and others of the courtiers, and consequently became the object of the queen's vindictive displeasure, and the victim of those arts of tormenting in which her Majesty excelled.

"It happened," relates Sir John Harrington, "that Lady M. Howard was possessed of a rich border, powdered with golde and pearle, and a velvet suite belonging thereto, which moved many to envye ; nor did it please the queene, who thought it exceeded her owne. One daye the queene did sende privately, and got the lady's rich vesture, which she put on herself, and came forthe the chamber among the ladies ; the kirtle and border was far too shorte for her Majestie's height ; and she asked every one how they liked her new-fancied suit ? At length she asked the owner herself 'if it was not made too

short and ill-becoming?’ which the poor ladie did presentlie consent to. ‘Why, then, if it become not me as being too shorte, I am minded it shall never become thee, as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well.’ This sharpe rebuke abashed the ladie, and she never adorned herself herewith any more.”

The story of Lady Mary Howard is thus continued in one of Fenton’s letters:—“I have not seen her Highnesse, save twice, since Easter last: bothe of which times she spake most vehemently and with great warmth of her servant, the Lady Marie Howard, forasmuche as she refused to bear her mantle at the hour her Highnesse is wonted to air in the garden, and on small rebuke did vent such unseemlie answer as did breede much choler in her mistress. Again, on other occasion, she was not ready to carry the cup of grace, during the dinner in the privie chamber; nor was she attending at the hour of her Majestie’s going to prayer. All which doth now so disquiet her Highnesse, that she swore she would no more show her any countenance, but out with all such ungracious, flouting wenches; because, forsooth, she hath much favour and marks of love from the young earl, which is not pleasing to the queene, who doth still much exhort all her women to remain in virgin state as much as may be. I ventured to say as far as discretion did go in defence of our friende, and did urge much in behalf of youth and enticing love, which did often abate of right measures in fair ladies; and moreover related what ever might please the queene, touching the confession of her great kindness to her sister Jane before her marriage; all which did nothing soothe her Highnesse’s anger, saying, ‘I have made her my servante, and she will now make herself my mistress; but in good faith, William, she shall not, and so tell her.’ In short, pitie doth move to save this ladie, and would beg such suite to the queene from you and your friends as may win her favour to spare on future amendmente.”

“It might not be amisse to talk to this younge ladie to be more dutiful, and not to be absent at meals or prayers; to bear her Highnesse’s mantle and other furniture, even more than all the rest of the servants, to make ample amendes by future diligence, and always to go first in a morninge to her Highnesse’s chamber, forasmuch as such kindnesse will much prevail to turn awaie all former displeasure: she must not entertaine my lord the earl in

any conversation, but shunne his companie ; and, moreover, be less careful in attiring her own person, for this seemeth as done more to win the earl, than her mistress' good-will. . . . If we consider the favour showed her familie, there is ground for ill-humour in the queene, who doth not now bear with such composed spirit as she was wont ; but since the Irish affairs seemeth more froward than commonlie she used to bear herself toward her women ; nor doth she hold them in discourse with such familiar matter, but often chides for small neglects, in such wise as to make these fair maids often cry and bewail themselves in piteous sort, as I am told by my sister Elizabeth."*

Like her father, the big and bluff King Harry, Elizabeth knew how to unite a certain coarse familiarity with the most unfeeling despotism, and the most peremptory self-will. But, with the imperious disposition of the Tudors, she inherited also their intrepidity, and had a good deal of strength of nerve as well as strength of mind : immediate and present peril never seems to have daunted her. The gross adulation, the unmeasured flattery, she received from her courtiers is at once ludicrous and disgusting, and proves the vulgar depravity of taste in her, who not only endured but exacted it. With all her extravagant personal vanity, her real sagacity could not have been deceived ; she was not so blind but that the sight of her own face in a mirror, when she began to grow old, threw her into "transports of impotent rage."† She must have seen, and she did see, that all the flattery addressed to her was false, and hollow, and self-interested ; but it was a tribute become necessary to her, and she enjoyed it with a perverted consciousness of her own power, that could thus force the herd of flatterers around her to belie their own eyes and understanding, and address her as a sacred goddess, a Venus, or nymph, at the age of sixty-five. It is very curious, and at the same time very

* *Vide* Nugæ Antiquæ, edit. by Parke.

† Towards the end of her life she discontinued the use of a looking-glass ! and it is even said that her tire-women, "confident in their mistress's prejudices against her mirror, sometimes indulged their own hatred and mirth, and ventured to lay upon the royal nose the carmine which ought to have embellished the cheeks."

pitiable, to contrast this extorted adulation with the confidential communications of her ministers and attendants ; with their complaints of incessant, hard, and often unrewarded service, of her Majesty's "grievous rating" and "marvellous choler ;" the congratulating each other when she condescended to be "reasonably quiet ;" her swearing at her ministers,* and frowning at her ladies ; beating "the fair Bridges" and other maids of honour ; swearing at Lady Arundel, and pinching poor Lady Huntingdon "very sorely." Coarse as were the exterior manners of that age compared with those of the present day, it still appears that this "maiden queen" set the fashion of still greater coarseness. Even worse than the harshness of her temper, and her rude, unamiable manners, was her extreme duplicity in the relations of private life. One of the most revolting traits recorded of her is that mentioned by her godson Harrington, who appears to have perfectly understood her character, and to have respected and admired her talents and her better qualities. "Her mind," he says, "was ofttime like the gentle air that cometh from the westerly point in a summer's morn ; it was sweet and refreshing to all around her. Again, she could put forth such alterations, as left no doubting whose daughter she was. By art and nature together so blended, it was difficult to find her right humour at any time, for few knew how to aim their shaft against her cunning." "I have seen her smile, forsooth, with great semblance of good liking to all around, and cause every man to open his most inward thought to her ; when, on a sudden, she would ponder in private on what had passed, write down all their opinions, draw them out as occasion required, and sometimes disprove to their faces what had been delivered a month before. Hence, she knew every one's part ; and by thus *fishing*, as Hatton said, she caught many poor fish, who little knew what snare was laid for them."

Harrington also bears witness to her extraordinary power of overawing all who approached her. In describing an interview he had with her when her "gracious disposition" had been, as

* Ritson has given a list of Queen Elizabeth's habitual oaths, which is more strange than edifying : and of one tremendous asseveration he observes, "She had it as often in her mouth as a fishwoman."

usual, distempered by the Irish affairs under Essex, he adds, "Until I come before Heaven I shall never come before a statelier judge again, nor one that can temper majesty, wisdom, learning, choler, and favour better than her Highness did at that time." "At last I was bid 'go home : ' I did not stay to be told twice. If all the Irish rebels had been at my heels, I should not have had better speed ; for I did now flee from one whom I loved and feared too."

It has been said that Elizabeth never forgot the woman in the sovereign : it might be said with much more truth, that she never forgot the sovereign in the woman ; and surely this is no praise. One more destitute of what is called *heart*, that is, of the capacity for all the gentle, generous, and kindly affections proper to her sex, cannot be imagined in female form. We hear of her "lionlike port ;" but womanlike or Christianlike formed no part of her character ; accordingly, we find that she passed through life without a friend, with the sense to know it, and yet with the folly and the pride to imagine that her station placed her above that want.

Robert Cecil, the son of the celebrated Lord Treasurer Burleigh, possessed, towards the close of her reign, the unbounded confidence of Elizabeth, as her principal secretary of state and prime minister, and betrayed his trust. He carried on a secret correspondence with the King of Scots and his ministers, in which every secret of Elizabeth's court and cabinet was divulged. If this treachery had transpired, it would certainly have cost him his head ; and on one occasion his acuteness and presence of mind saved him, when on the verge of ruin. The anecdote is characteristic both of Elizabeth and her minister. "Elizabeth was taking the air in a carriage, where Cecil occupied a seat, when one of the royal posts passed them. 'From whence ? ' the queen demanded : and the answer was, 'From Scotland.' 'Give me your packet,' said the queen. It was delivered accordingly. 'Open it,' said she to Cecil, 'and show me the contents.' As the packet contained some part of Cecil's correspondence with the King of Scots, the command placed the crafty statesman within view of ruin and the scaffold. To have attempted to suppress or abstract any of the papers which the packet contained would have been a hazardous experiment in

the presence of the most sharp-sighted and jealous of sovereigns. Cecil's presence of mind found an expedient. 'This packet,' said he, as he pulled his knife out to cut the strings with which it was secured, 'has an uncommon odour, and must have been in some filthy budgets.' The queen was alarmed: she had been all her life delicate in the sense of smelling, and was apprehensive of poison, which the age believed could be communicated by that organ. 'Take it,' she said to Cecil, 'and let it be aired before the contents are presented to us.' The wily secretary obeyed her commands, and obtained the desired opportunity to withdraw such papers as he deemed it important to conceal." *

Of her two celebrated favourites, the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Essex, the first was a most weak and worthless man, contemned and feared by her nobles, odious to her people; yet, in spite of all his vices and incapacity, he died, as he had lived, a favourite; and his influence for nearly thirty years can hardly be reconciled with the general idea of Elizabeth's wisdom and penetration. Her partiality for Essex seems to have been the dotage of a vain old woman. She could not appreciate his fine qualities; she would not make allowances for his faults; and he was too frank and spirited to cringe at her footstool. The memorable box on the ear he received from her would have been nothing from a woman; from an angry sovereign it was intolerable. "Let those," he exclaimed, "that mean to make their profit of princes, show no sense of princes' injuries! Let *them* acknowledge an infinite absoluteness on earth, that do not believe an infinite absoluteness in heaven. I owe her Majesty the duty of an earl, but I will never serve her as a villain and a slave!" This was language as strange as unpardonable, at a time when the House of Commons had publicly voted their queen "a Divinity on earth, from whose will there was no appeal." Essex was too rash and unsuspecting to be a match for the cool, calculating, wily ministers, whose interest it was to destroy him out of their way, not only as the favourite of the present sovereign, but as likely to be all-powerful with her successor; and partly by their arts, and partly by his own fiery temper, he was brought to the block, in the thirty-

* *Vide* Sir Walter Scott's History of Scotland.

fourth year of his age. In the exasperation of offended power and jealous self-will the queen signed the warrant for his execution, and pined away the remainder of her life in unavailing remorse. Accustomed to perform other acts of severity without any detriment to her peace of mind, she thought she could surmount this pain by the mere force of her will. She was surprised and indignant to find that she could not, and that there was a mighty hand upon her, under which she writhed in vain. She was now aged and feeble ; she had survived her old servants and ministers ; she was without resources in herself ; she knew she was surrounded by venal, interested men, who only waited till the last gasp had left her frail, careworn, wrinkled carcase, to crowd round her successor ; with all the bitterness of impotent rage and jealousy she felt this, but she "queen'd it" to the last with a sullen dignity. The picture of Elizabeth, the renowned and feared, the idol at home, the terror abroad, lying on her palace floor with her finger in her mouth, seeking no support from religion, no consolation from affection, friendless, helpless, hopeless, comfortless ; and thus gradually wasting into death ; is such a lesson on the nothingness of power, and the miscalculations of selfishness, that history affords not one more terrible and impressive.

In estimating the real character of this queen historians—both readers and writers of history—are divided into two parties : those who, investing her with all the glory of her times, identify her with our national grandeur and the triumph of our Church ; and those who regard her merely as the rival and the slayer of Mary of Scotland, and, as such, turn from her with horror, partly caused by their prejudices in favour of Mary. It appears to me, that Queen Elizabeth had not greatness, or wisdom, or genius, in the proper acceptation of these words. With occasional flashes of magnanimity, called forth by the grandeur of her position, there was no real or consistent elevation of soul ; she had prudence, she had sagacity, but both were profoundly selfish, and confined within narrow bounds. The wisdom that "looks before and after," and calculates for happiness on a great scale, she had not ; and her cleverness, her penetration, her talents for business, fell far short of genius. Her affections, from the beginning of her life, were ill placed or

blighted : to this, and to a peculiar physical temperament, much of her irritability and jealousy may be attributed. She was essentially strong-minded, but also a vulgar-minded woman, and her character appears to have wanted the true elements both of elegance and greatness.

Queen Elizabeth died at Richmond in 1603, two years after the death of Essex. Her last words were strongly characteristic, and exhibited "the *ruling* passion strong in death." During her whole life she had shown a perverse dread of naming her successor ; but it was necessary that the question should be put to her in her last moments. She replied, "My seat has been the seat of kings, and I will have *no rascal* to succeed me" (as if all who were not princes were necessarily rascals). Secretary Cecil boldly asked her what she meant by those words, that "*no rascal should succeed her ;*" to which she answered that "she would be succeeded by a king ; and who should that be but the King of Scots?"—thus in a manner acknowledging the legal rights of Mary Stuart, whom she had hated, and at length put to death, for possessing and maintaining those rights.



CHRISTINA,

QUEEN OF SWEDEN.

ALTHOUGH the arts which she patronised threw a factitious and a temporary splendour round the character of Christina, it has proved too superficial and unfounded to dazzle or deceive posterity. The contemporaries of this queen appear at a loss what to say or think of a woman whose life "was one contradiction:" whose intellectual powers and exalted station procured her no respect; who gave away a throne from an excess of selfishness, and divested herself of power from a love of independence; whose passion for glory ended in abasement and self-degradation, and whose ambition stooped to a mean dependence upon those whom she despised. Had Christina moved in a private station, she had been merely regarded as a vain, clever, and very eccentric woman, and might have found many a parallel among her own sex; but being placed upon a throne, where all her qualities, good and bad, were beheld through a magnifying medium, she appeared to those of her own time extraordinary; and, working with great means, she even appeared great. To the impartial and philosophical observer she appears to have been merely a woman of intellect, misplaced and mismanaged, whose mind was tinctured by disease, arising from the total want of all control from within and without. She seems to have been endued by nature with talents and dispositions which ought to have rendered her life happy, her reign glorious, and her memory illustrious: but ill educated—at least ill educated for the station

for which she was destined—and destitute of virtue or common sense, her sex, her learning, and her splendid situation only served to render her more conspicuously wretched, ridiculous, and pitiable. As a woman, she passed through life without loving or being loved; and as a queen, she sank into the grave uncrowned, unhonoured, and unlamented.

Christina of Sweden was the only daughter of the celebrated Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, surnamed the “Lion of the North,” from his conquests and military achievements: her mother was Maria-Eleonora of Brandenburgh, daughter of the Elector John Sigismond. It is asserted that Gustavus married this princess from political motives, and contrary to his own inclinations, being at that time deeply in love with a young Swedish girl named Christina, who afterwards died. It is also said that it was from affection to her memory that he bestowed the name of Christina on his daughter and heiress. It is not, however, the less certain that Eleonora of Brandenburgh succeeded in gaining the entire affections of her husband. She is described by contemporary writers as a fair-complexioned and handsome woman, with a fine figure, and soft, graceful manners; endued with a disposition for the tender and romantic, and some taste for the fine arts; but deficient in judgment, and weak in character, with all that paltry jealousy of power and turn for intrigue which is one of the signs of a little mind. She was passionately attached to her husband, who loved her for her beauty and gentleness, but took care to exclude her from all political influence, both during his life and afterwards by his last will.

Christina was born at Stockholm, December 18th, 1626. Her parents, who ardently desired a son to inherit the throne, were considerably disappointed at her birth: her father, however, soon reconciled himself to the will of Providence, and caused the same rejoicings to be made as are usual at the birth of an heir-apparent. Not so her mother. The queen had listened to the assurances of some pretended astrologers, who, after consulting the stars, had promised that she should be the mother of a son; and she was the more inconsolable because Christina, far from displaying any of the graces of her sex, was in her childhood singularly ugly. She appears to have treated her

in early infancy with a degree of indifference which the young queen never forgot, and in after-times repaid by a neglect which shortened the life of her parent.*

Her father, however, loved her with a fond affection ; and it is related that when she was attacked by a dangerous illness, at a time when he was distant several hundred miles from the capital, he instantly set off to see her, and travelled night and day without repose till he reached Stockholm. Her restoration to health was celebrated by a solemn and public festival : and after this period she generally accompanied her father in all his journeys. On one occasion, when they entered the fortress of Calmar, the governor did not venture to salute the king with the usual discharge of artillery, fearing lest the thunder of the cannon should terrify the young princess into convulsions : she was then about two years old. Her father hesitated ; but after a moment's silence he exclaimed, "Fire !—she is a soldier's daughter, and must learn to bear it!" The child, far from being startled or discomposed by these warlike sounds, laughed and clapped her hands ; and her father gloried in her intrepidity. He conceived thus early the idea of giving his daughter the education and sentiments which belong to the other sex ; and it is certain that Christina so far forgot her own, as to regret, to the last moment of her life, that she had never headed an army in the field of battle, nor seen the blood of men flow in mortal strife.

It would, perhaps, be too much to assert that she inherited these dispositions from her warlike father. Gustavus was regarded as the greatest general and the greatest conqueror of modern times, until the rise of Napoleon : but his pursuit of military glory had, at least, a higher and more generous motive. He took arms for the preservation of the Protestant faith in

* "La Reine, ma mère," says Christina, "qui avait toutes les foiblesses aussi bien que toutes les vertus de son sexe, ne pouvait me souffrir parcequ'elle disait que j'étais fille et laide ; et elle n'avait pas grand tort, car j'étais basanée comme un petit Maure. Mon père m'aimait fort, et je répondais aussi à son amitié d'une manière qui surpassait mon âge. Il semblait que je connaissais les différences de leurs merites et de leurs sentimens, et que je commençais de rendre justice par eux dès le berceau."

Germany, and to maintain the independence of the lesser states and princes of the empire against the overwhelming power of the house of Austria. Of all those monarchs whose fame rests chiefly upon their military prowess, Gustavus appears to have been the most amiable and magnanimous, and his conduct the most pure from overweening pride and personal ambition. When in 1632 he entered Saxony victorious, and was received by the people as their saviour, when they hailed him with acclamations of gratitude and admiration, a sad presentiment came over his mind, in which the chivalrous spirit of a royal hero mingled with that deep enthusiastic piety which distinguished some of the old Scottish Covenanters. On this occasion he appeared oppressed and shocked by the excess of the homage paid to him. "I am afraid," said he, "that God will punish me for the folly of this people. He who has called himself a jealous God will show them,—ay, and me too,—that I am but a weak mortal man. Great God ! bear witness that this is against my will ! to Thy providence I commit myself !"

Another of his speeches places him even in a more amiable light, and is worth recording, were it only to show what a hero and a conqueror thought of that glory which usually dazzles the multitude. The deputies of some German city appeared before him to compliment him on his victories and express their gratitude for his protection. They assured him that but for him the Austrians would have founded a universal monarchy on the ruin of the peace and liberties of Europe ; that God had raised him up to be the deliverer of Germany, and the guardian of his own country ; and that his invincible courage was a special effect of the Divine goodness. "Say, rather," said Gustavus, interrupting them, "an effect of the Divine wrath. The war which we carry on as a remedy is the most insupportable of all earthly evils ; worse than any of the evils it proposes to avert. Be assured that Providence never deviates from the usual course of things without chastising some one ; and when He bestows on a monarch extraordinary talents or ambition, it is not as a favour, but a scourge and a punishment to the nations." "A conqueror," he added, "is one who in his passion for glory deprives himself and his subjects of all repose. He rushes

forward like a torrent, carrying desolation in his path, and filling the world with terror, misery, and confusion.”*

Such was the father of Christina. She was not more than four years old when he was called upon to take the command of the confederated armies in Germany. The emperor, Ferdinand II., had placed at the head of his forces two of his bravest generals, Count Tilly and the celebrated Wallenstein, and prepared to carry on the contest with vigour.

On leaving Stockholm for the theatre of war, Gustavus made the best possible arrangements for the government of his kingdom during his absence, and in case of his death. He caused the states-general and the army to acknowledge Christina as heiress to his throne; he named a council of regency to exercise the supreme power during her minority, and placed the famous Chancellor Oxenstiern at the head of affairs. In an assembly of the senate he solemnly confided his daughter to their loyalty and protection; and having thus disposed all things for the administration of his government, he prepared to set off for the seat of war, accompanied by the queen. The young princess being brought to take leave of her father, began to recite a little speech she had been taught for the occasion; but, occupied by his own reflections, he turned away absently, without listening to her: the child immediately stopped short, and, pulling him by the coat, called his attention to herself; the king snatched her up in his arms, and kissed her repeatedly, mingling tears with his caresses; and when at last he resigned her to her attendants, she wept so violently for several hours as to endanger her health. To these circumstances, natural enough in themselves, the populace attached a superstitious importance, when, two years afterwards, Gustavus perished at the battle of Lutzen, in the prime of his life, and at the moment when all Europe rang with the fame of his successes. This celebrated battle was fought on the 16th of November, 1633; and though victory remained with the Swedes, they esteemed it dearly purchased by the death of a sovereign who possessed so many great and good qualities, and was among the least

* The whole of this remarkable speech is given at length in Archenholtz.

criminal and selfish of those monarchs who have sacrificed the welfare of their subjects to false ideas of glory.

The queen-mother returned to Sweden with the body of her husband, which she never quitted from the day of his death to that of his interment—a period of two years. His heart, which had been embalmed and enclosed in a casket of gold decorated with jewels, was suspended to her bed, and every day “she wept over it with great lamentation, giving other tokens of extreme love and grief, which (her daughter remarks) were more easily excused than justified.” After her return to Sweden the senate and clergy prevailed upon her to resign this precious casket, that it might be interred with the remains of the king ; but, with that fanciful turn of mind for which she was remarkable, she perpetuated, at least, the recollection of her sorrow, by instituting the order of the “Golden Heart,” and distributing the badge (a heart-shaped medal) among the ladies and officers of her court.

Christina had been separated from her mother for nearly four years, and when they met for the first time after the death of Gustavus she was about eight years old : the sight of her child, by recalling the image of her father, whom she greatly resembled, brought back the feelings of nature to the mother’s heart. “She caught me in her arms,” says Christina, “half drowned me in her tears, and had nearly smothered me in her embraces.” She refused to part with her daughter, and kept her with her in her retirement for nearly two years ; a proof of affection which the young queen could have dispensed with. “A force de m’aimer,” says Christina, with her usual *naïveté*, “elle me fit désespérer.” The deep mourning of the queen-mother and her attendants, the melancholy and monotonous life they led, did not, however, damp the spirit or chill the mind of Christina : she confesses that the weakness of her mother so far turned to her advantage, that her excessive impatience of the dulness and restraint around her attached her to her studies ; and her aversion for the gloomy apartment in which the queen-dowager mourned in state made her employ many hours with her books and her preceptors, which, under other circumstances, had been spent in amusement.

The regency, from consideration for the feelings of the

mother, left Christina for some time under her care : as she had been excluded from all share in the government, they thought some little amends were due to her ; but weak in judgment, and uncertain in temper, she appears to have been ill calculated to manage the high spirit and gifted mind of her daughter. She would sometimes indulge her to excess, or weep over her in an agony of fondness ; at another time she would punish her for slight faults with capricious severity. Among the recollections of her childhood, Christina tells us that she had an extreme dislike to beer and wine, and that the queen-dowager would not suffer her to drink water ; that she consequently suffered from excessive thirst for days together, and would sometimes steal the *eau de rosée* which stood on her mother's toilette : being detected in this very pardonable theft, her mother whipped her most severely, which had the effect of making her a confirmed water-drinker for the remainder of her life.

The number of fools and dwarfs which the queen-dowager kept about her person, according to the custom of the country, was another subject of disgust to her daughter : Christina, at a very early age, had sufficient sense and taste to abhor these courtly appendages, as the remains of barbarism and ignorance. The women who surrounded her mother were not of a high grade in point of mind or accomplishments, and it is not surprising that a girl of so much spirit, vivacity, and talent, as Christina early displayed, should fly from such society. At this time, that is, from her eighth to her tenth year, she studied regularly six hours in the morning and six hours in the evening, every day, except Saturday and Sunday : her progress, therefore, in every department of knowledge was not so wonderful as her unwearied and voluntary application.

The members of the regency* managed the public affairs with consummate prudence. It was their first care to secure

* These were:—1. Count Brahe, who was *Drotset*, or grand judge of Sweden, and president of the senate ; 2. The old Count de la Gardie, grand constable ; 3. The Baron Charles Carlson, high admiral, and natural brother of the late king ; 4. The grand chancellor, Oxenstiern ; 5. The high treasurer, Gabriel Oxenstiern. They were all men of talent and probity, who had grown old in the service of the Crown.

the succession of the throne to Christina ; for, though by the constitution of Sweden the crown was not altogether elective, the sovereign was not legally in possession of the crown till the succession was approved by the general assembly of the states. A diet was summoned, therefore, soon after the death of Gustavus, with more than usual solemnity, and the president demanded of the four orders of the state—the nobles, the clergy, the burghers, and the peasants—"whether they accepted the Princess Christina, the daughter of Gustavus, for their queen?" One of the deputies of the peasantry, whose name was Lars Larsson (or Laurence, the son of Laurence), here rose in his place, and asked, "Who is this daughter of Gustavus, of whom you speak? we do not know her, we have never seen her ;—set her before us !" The assembly at these words began to murmur among themselves, on which the president, or marshal of the diet, said, "I will present her to you if such is your will." He then left the room, and returning with Christina in his arms, he placed her in the midst of them. Larsson going up to her, examined the child for some moments, and then exclaimed, "Yes ; it is herself : those are the very features, the eyes, and the brow, of our dead father and king, Gustavus. Let her be our queen !" At these words the whole assembly burst into acclamations, Christina was placed upon her father's throne, and the oaths of allegiance were taken with enthusiasm. Though too young to understand the nature of her situation, Christina was not too young to receive a strong impression of her own grandeur and power. She received the homage of her subjects with much infantine dignity and self-possession. "I still remember," she says, "how enchanted I was to see all these men at my feet, kissing my hand."* Though she afterwards became so impatient of the trammels of court etiquette,

* *Vide La Vie de la Reine Christine, faite par elle-même, et dédiée à Dieu.*—It is to be regretted that this very curious and original fragment does not extend beyond a few pages. It is written in French with a degree of force and *naïveté* which are perfectly characteristic, but without any pretension to elegance, and is printed in the supplementary volume of the "*Mémoires*" collected by Archenholtz. It will be quoted wherever it illustrates in a peculiar manner the character of Christina, and always in the original words.

yet as a child she was extremely fond of playing the queen ; and when brought forward on state occasions, she acted her part with wonderful discretion. She was not more than seven years old when the Muscovite ambassadors were introduced to her : their grotesque manners, long beards, and singular dresses had excited the ridicule and amazement of the whole court, and fears were entertained lest Christina, by some act of childish folly, should give offence, or disturb the solemnity of the occasion. When her preceptor and her chamberlain endeavoured to prepare her for the interview, and exhorted her not to be afraid, she only laughed in their faces, saying resolutely, "Why should I fear? tell me only what I am to do, and I will do it." Accordingly she ascended her throne, and not only received the ambassadors without the slightest discomposure, but replied to their speeches with a confidence and dignity which astonished the strangers and delighted her own attendants.

Gustavus, before his departure, had appointed Axel Baner to be the governor of Christina, and John Mathias to be her preceptor : the first was a mere courtier ; the latter was really a man of learning and virtue, whom Christina in her after-life never mentioned but with respect and affection. In the instructions which the king had left for the management of his daughter, he desired that she should be brought up with the modesty proper to her sex, but in every other respect should receive a masculine education. He was not aware that he required two things which were, in fact, incompatible with each other, and that in surrounding his daughter almost exclusively with men, however learned and accomplished, and in cultivating only the sentiments and the acquirements proper to the other sex, he was depraving her manners, if not her mind, and striking at the very foundation of the only feminine virtue on which he insisted. Christina early displayed an "antipathy," to use her own expression, "to all that women do and say ;" but she became an excellent classical scholar, a great admirer of the Greeks and Romans, and all the heroes and poets of antiquity, particularly of Homer and Alexander the Great. At the age of fourteen she read Thucydides in the original : she rode and hunted, and managed a horse and

a gun to admiration : * she harangued her senate, and dictated to her ministers. Meantime the gentler graces and virtues of her own sex were neglected : and thus she forfeited all claim to the deference due to her as a woman, without having the strength, either of mind or body, which gives the dominion to man. She grew up self-willed, peremptory, arrogant, and impatient, to an inconceivable degree. Being early emancipated from the restraint and reserve in which females of every station are properly educated, she became at length quite incapable of submitting to any control whatever ; the slightest opposition to her slightest caprice became insupportable ; and not the less so, because the natural strength of her understanding allowed her to see and feel the full force of those obligations and duties which her wilful, impatient temper rendered burthensome and intolerable.

In the meantime her education proceeded under the guardianship of the five great officers of the Crown, who honestly fulfilled their trust according to the intentions of the late king. When she was about nine years old, they judged it necessary to remove her from her mother (whose weakness of character and foreign prejudices had rendered her exceedingly unpopular in Sweden), and she was placed under the immediate charge of her aunt, the Princess Catherine, wife of the Prince Palatine. But the education of the young queen was considered of too much importance to be entirely entrusted to her or to any single person. Certain instructions were drawn up by the council of regency, and approved by the diet, which were to serve as guide to the Princess Catherine, Axel Baner, Horn, and Mathias, in the direction and management of the queen. This document (which is dated March 24th, 1635) insists chiefly on three principal points :—

First, That as her Majesty, in virtue of her rank as sovereign, claims the obedience, the faithful service, and the entire and humble loyalty of her subjects ; so she should be taught that these duties are reciprocal : she is to learn to love and esteem

* It is fair to add what Christina says of herself on this point. “ *Bien que j’animasse la chasse, je n’étais pas cruelle, et je n’ai jamais tué un animal sans en avoir senti une sensible compassion.* ”

her people; to be gracious and affable in her deportment towards them; to consider their interest as inseparably her own; to speak well of her country, and to treat the senate and her guardians with particular respect.

Secondly, They desire that her Majesty should be well instructed in the manners, customs, and laws of foreign countries; but that she should be carefully brought up to prefer, and to reverence, and in all respects observe constantly, the manners, customs, and laws of Sweden; that those who surrounded her should be Swedes by birth; that a certain number of young ladies of rank should be educated with her as attendants and companions; and that in selecting these from the first families particular attention should be had to the characters of their parents, and the manner in which they had been previously educated, in order that the young queen might not be exposed to the contagion of bad example; and the same scrupulous care was to extend to the choice of the women who waited on her person.

Thirdly, They remarked that, as she was destined to rule a great kingdom, it was important that she should be instructed in the duties of a Christian sovereign; but the science of government being one which depended on time and experience, and was scarcely to be taught by book or by rule, or inculcated in childhood, therefore they recommended that a foundation should be laid in the early study of the Scriptures, as the proper basis of all knowledge and all virtue. They also recommended a particular attention to history, as most necessary to a sovereign, and desired that she should be made a good accountant: they especially insisted that not only all pernicious books, but all trifling works and books of mere amusement, should be carefully kept from her perusal; and that she should not be suffered to imbibe any ideas either of religion or policy which should be contrary to the Lutheran faith and to the liberties of her people.

There was much good sense in these instructions: but nothing was more easy and obvious than to draw up a plan upon such general principles; the difficulty consisted in applying them in detail, and this difficulty was increased by the extraordinary character and endowments of the pupil. The Princess Catherine

was a woman of sense and spirit, and the preceptor Mathias had learning and integrity ; but had the one been a saint and the other a Stoic, Christina, apparently, would have tried the patience of both. In fact, she never seems to have been submitted to anything like discipline of the mind or the will ; her extraordinary quickness rendered all acquirements easy to which she chose to apply, and her "*insurmountable*" aversion to all the employments and recreations of her sex was indulged and encouraged. Like Tasso's Clorinda,

"Ai lavori d'Aracne, all'ago, ai fusi
Inchinar non degnò la man superba."

Dancing seems to have been the only feminine accomplishment to which she applied.

But, on the other hand, she was so indefatigable in her studies as to fatigue all her tutors ; so inexhaustible in her spirits, so restless, that her women and attendants had no repose day or night.* Besides her usual lessons in history, philosophy, and the classics, she acquired the German, French, Italian, and Spanish languages, merely as an amusement, and without the assistance of any master. The people who surrounded her at this time appear to have been selected with as much impartiality and judgment as was consistent with all circumstances ; but, if we may trust her own account, Christina suffered the usual fate of princes, that of being spoiled in her childhood by the deference paid to her rank, even by those who instructed

* "Je souffrais le chaud et le froid sans aucune peine. Je marchais de longues traites à pied. Je courais à cheval sans me lasser jamais. Je faisais une vie si extraordinaire malgré tout le monde. On fit tout ce qu'on put pour m'en empêcher, mais il fallait avoir patience et me laisser faire. J'aimais l'étude avec passion ; mais je n'aimais pas moins la chasse, la course, le jeu. J'aimais les chevaux, les chiens ; mais aucune divertissement de plaisir ne m'a jamais fait perdre un moment, ni de mes études, ni de mon devoir ; et vous savez, SEIGNEUR, que je n'ai rien à me reprocher la-dessus par votre grace. Les femmes et les hommes qui étaient de garde auprès de moi se désespéraient, car je les fatiguais furieusement ; et je ne leur donnais du repos, ni jour, ni nuit ; et quand mes femmes voulaient me détourner d'une si fatigante manière de vivre, je me moquais d'elles, et je leur disais : 'Si vous avez sommeil, allez vous reposer : j'en'ai que faire de vous.'"—*Christine.*

her. She observes very cleverly, with a reference to herself, that "men flatter princes even in their cradles, and fear their memory as well as their power ; they handle them timidly, as they do young lions, who can only scratch now, but may hereafter tear and devour."

During the minority of Christina the foreign affairs of Sweden were conducted by the Chancellor Oxenstiern, a statesman celebrated for his loyalty and integrity not less than for his great political sagacity.* Under his direction the war was carried on in Germany with various success. Field-Marshal Horn, and Generals Baner, Torstenson, and Wrangel, successively commanded the Swedes and their allies, and were opposed by Wallenstein, Count Tilly, Piccolomini, the Archduke Ferdinand, and other famous military leaders. This was the terrible war called in history "the Thirty Years' War," during which the finest parts of Germany were desolated, social order almost annihilated, and the progress of the arts and general civilization greatly retarded : as to the amount of individual misery and crime, it is beyond all computation.

The domestic affairs of Sweden were meantime regulated by the council of regency ; and under their administration the country flourished. To the Prince Palatine, the uncle of Christina, had been entrusted the department of the finances ; but the States were so jealous of his influence over his niece, and of the hopes he was known to entertain of marrying her to his only son Charles Gustavus, that they deprived him of this important charge, and bestowed it upon Gabriel Oxenstiern, cousin of the chancellor.

The late king had expressly excluded his widow, the queen-dowager, from any share in the regency ; and she was so highly offended at this arrangement, in which the ministers persisted, and so incensed at being deprived of all control over her daughter, that she secretly fled to Denmark, and thence to Brandenburgh, where she continued to reside till Christina was of age to take the government into her own hands.

In 1639, when Christina was in her fourteenth year, her aunt,

* Axel Count Oxenstiern was born in 1583. It is worth while to remark, that this celebrated man, having lost his father at an early age, was educated almost entirely by his mother, born Countess de Bielke.

the Princess Catherine, died ; and it does not appear that she had any successor as principal governess to the young queen : within two years afterwards, Christina, by the advice of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, was admitted to preside in the senate. She was extremely assiduous in her attendance, gave her opinion on matters of consequence with equal propriety and decision, and appears to have entered upon the duties of her high station with all the real enthusiasm of a young and ardent mind. As she approached the age of womanhood, her council were anxious that she should choose a consort among the princes of Europe who contended for the honour of her hand. During the first few years of her reign proposals, embassies, negotiations, remonstrances on this subject occupied her ministers, but to herself appear to have been more a source of momentary amusement, or irritation, than of serious thought. The young elector, Frederick William of Brandenburg, had been already selected by her father as her future husband ; and this alliance was popular among the people and the soldiery ; but the Chancellor Oxenstiern and others of the ministry dreaded the interference of Germany in the affairs of Sweden, and the introduction of Germans into offices of trust and power ; in other words, they feared for themselves and their own places ; and this alliance was declined.

It is said that Oxenstiern had early entertained the ambitious design of marrying Christina to his favourite son Count Eric Oxenstiern, and that this was the secret motive which induced him to throw such obstacles and difficulties into the negotiation with the house of Brandenburg as prolonged the treaty for several years, and at length rendered it abortive.

The two sons of the King of Denmark were also suitors for her hand : but Sweden remembered too well the evils of Danish ascendancy, and the tyranny from which the first Gustavus had delivered his country, to consent to see the two crowns again united. Don John of Austria and Philip IV. of Spain were excluded by the difference of religion, and many other considerations, and their pretensions were merely a subject of mirth to the young queen. The Emperor Ferdinand would gladly have made peace on condition of obtaining her hand for his son, the King of the Romans : he believed that the idea of becoming the

Empress of Germany would have flattered the haughty temper and ambitious spirit of Christina; and she was heard to acknowledge that the temptation was strong, but she would not farther commit herself. Though such an alliance would have gratified her personal pride and her love of power, it would have been displeasing to her people, and would have reduced Sweden to the state of a province of the German empire. Ladislas, King of Poland, and his brother and successor, John Casimir, were not more successful. Her ministry had objections against most of these princes; Christina apparently to *all*. She had early conceived an aversion to marriage, and was resolved to preserve her personal freedom at all hazards, both as a woman and a queen.

In 1644, being then eighteen, she was declared of age, according to the laws of Sweden; the regency was dissolved, and she assumed the reins of government with all the ceremonies usual on such occasions.

We can hardly imagine a position more magnificent and interesting than that of Christina when she assumed the government of her kingdom; and the portrait which may be drawn of her at this period of her life presents a picture so different from that degradation of character and situation she afterwards exhibited, that in justice to her,—in justice to human nature,—we must dwell upon it for a moment.*

Sweden, which had been for several ages only an obscure corner of Europe, had gradually risen in the scale of nations from the time that Gustavus Vasa, the great-grandfather of Christina, had delivered his country from the usurpation of the Danes. It had attained the highest degree of glory and importance by the military exploits and political influence of her father, the great Gustavus. After his death, the Generals Baner, Wrangel, and Torstenson maintained the glory of the Swedish arms in Germany; and during the minority of his daughter the wise and firm administration of the council of regency, and particularly of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, had maintained the internal tranquillity and prosperity of the kingdom. Under these auspicious circumstances Christina, who had been born

* The particulars which follow are taken from the various portraits of Christina, by Chanut, by Manniechied, and others who knew her personally at this time.

to the throne,—cradled, as she says, amid laurels and trophies of victory,—assumed a sceptre which was hers by the double right of her hereditary claims and the free consent of the states-general. She was in the bloom of youth, full of health, vigour, and activity ; the natural cheerfulness of her spirits had been preserved by constant exercise of body and mind ; and although she was proud, passionate, and capricious, she was also gay, frank, and generous. She entertained at this time a lofty and even sublime idea of the high destiny to which she was called, and of the multiplied duties and tremendous responsibility it imposed on her. All her resolutions and intentions appear to have been right and just ; and, to put these intentions into practice, she had youthful enthusiasm, surpassing talents, a strong constitution, and the prospect of a long life and reign before her. Though learned beyond most of her sex, the vanity of learning had not yet seized her, and literature was to her, what it ought always to have been—an amusement, not a pursuit. She understood most of the languages of Europe ; Latin, French, German, Italian, she wrote and spoke as fluently as her native tongue : her proficiency in Greek has already been mentioned. At this time she seems to have preferred the French language, and it was spoken almost habitually in her court. She would have no prime minister, and from the very commencement of her reign (dating it from the dissolution of the regency) she received and read all the despatches, dictated the replies to her secretaries, which she afterwards looked over and corrected herself ; and while the regal power had all the gloss of novelty she certainly wore it with dignity and grace. Her indefatigable attention to the business of the state excited the astonishment of the foreign ministers, and the admiration of her people ; she constantly attended all the deliberations of her councils, and by the force of her character and her resolute temper she exercised the most unbounded influence over the senate, who yielded to her more rapidly than they would have yielded to a monarch of their own sex. It is asserted that she was at this time more despotic than any Swedish sovereign from the time of Eric XIV. to the change of the constitution under Gustavus III.

In person she was not handsome ; her figure was below the middle size, but well formed, with the exception of a slight

deformity in one of her shoulders, caused by a fall in her infancy—it was, however, scarcely perceptible ; and her deportment and all her movements were remarkable for dignity, ease, and freedom. Her features were rather large and striking in proportion to her figure, and her whole countenance, unless controlled for especial purposes, was singular for its mobility and vivacity. Her eyes were of a brilliant hazel, quick and penetrating ; her nose aquiline ; her mouth too wide,* and when at rest not agreeable in its expression ; her smile, however, was bright and pleasing, and her teeth fine, though she took little care of them. She had a profusion of light brown hair, which she seldom combed ;† and a man's fur cap, or a knot of ribbon, was in general her only coiffure, till later in life she exchanged these for a periwig. She was extremely negligent in her dress, and never allowed herself more than a quarter of an hour at her morning toilet. Except upon state occasions, her attire was very simple and uniform ; it consisted of a suit of plain grey stuff or cloth, shorter than was usually worn, for the convenience of walking and riding, with a black scarf around her neck, and rarely a single ornament. She was temperate, and ever abstemious in eating, apparently quite indifferent as to what was placed before her, and was never heard to praise or dispraise any dish at the table.

Notwithstanding her despotic temper, her general deportment was frank, good-humoured, and easy.‡ She affected in conversation a Stoicism which she was far from carrying into practice. Her singularities had not at this time degenerated into that extreme of eccentricity and coarseness which she afterwards exhibited. When inclined to play the queen, her countenance

* If we may trust to her portrait by Bourdon : one of her admirers calls it “une bouche modique et jolie.”

† “Elle n'a nul soin de sa parure ; on ne peigne ses cheveux qu'une fois par semaine. Quelquefois elle sera jusqu'à quinze jours sans se faire peigner.”

‡ “Dans la conversation ordinaire elle est si familière qu'on ne la prendrait pas pour une grande dame, bien loin de la croire Reine.” “Je lui ai souvent ouï dire, qu'elle vivait sans chagrin, et sans inquiétude ; et qu'elle ne connaissait rien au monde d'assez grand, d'assez nuisible, ou d'assez rude pour pouvoir troubler la tranquillité de son esprit.”—*Chanut.*

could assume an expression of exceeding haughtiness, and her eyes so much fire and vivacity, that General Wrangel, who had made all Germany tremble at his very name, was himself known to tremble (or perhaps *affect* to tremble) in her presence. Like our Elizabeth, she took pleasure in daunting with a look those who approached her ; and her courtiers, who soon discovered her foible, knew well how to flatter her in this respect.

She had women about her, as part of her royal state, but seldom condescended to notice, far less converse with, any of them, and openly professed an unmeasured contempt for her own sex. Her only female favourite was the Countess Ebba Sparre, one of her maids of honour, who was a year or two younger than herself, and eminently beautiful and amiable. Christina used to call her "*la belle comtesse*," and by this title she was distinguished to the end of her life. Ebba Sparre never attempted to exercise the slightest influence over her royal mistress, and appears to have been of a gentle, unobtrusive disposition and blameless manners.

Among the men who surrounded Christina in the beginning of her reign, the first in rank was her cousin, Charles Gustavus, the Prince Palatine. The most celebrated was the Chancellor Oxenstiern, esteemed at the time the greatest statesman in Europe ; more than a match for Richelieu in abilities, and far his superior in wisdom and integrity. But the most distinguished by the queen's favour was the Count Magnus de la Gardie, whom she married to her cousin, the Princess Mary Euphrosyne, and loaded with honours. He was her grand-chamberlain, and afterwards ambassador to France. M. Chanut, the French minister, a man of considerable ability, possessed much of her confidence ; and Adler Salvius, whom she raised from an obscure station to be a senator and a noble, was high in her favour, and entrusted with her most secret negotiations.*

* When the senate hesitated to admit Salvius as one of their number, on account of his plebeian origin, Christina replied, "When good advice and wise counsel are wanted, who looks for sixteen quarters? In your opinion, Salvius only requires to have been nobly born ; and he may be well satisfied if you have no other reproach to make him : the part requisite in all employments of state is not nobility, but capacity."

Her cousin, Charles Gustavus, had a high command in the army, where he studied the art of war under Torstenson and Wrangel ; and when he visited the court was always treated by the queen with the honour due to his birth and rank. Although he was the heir presumptive to the crown, and was much beloved by the military, she never indulged the slightest jealousy against him ; and though he was a suitor for her hand, she kept him steadily at a distance, nor did he ever dare to presume on that partiality in his favour which the whole court had early detected.

Count Peter Brahé held at this time the office of Drotset, or grand justiciary and first senator of Sweden (a dignity resembling that of our Lord High Chancellor). He was a man of great talents and integrity, and high in the confidence of the queen and the people.

This slight sketch will give some idea of Christina and her court during the first five or six years of her reign ; nor can we wonder that the eyes of all Europe should have been fixed on this singular woman with interest, admiration, and astonishment. She was, in fact, the only sovereign of that time who was invested with anything like personal greatness. Mazarin governed France during the minority of Louis XIV. ; Olivares governed Spain in the name of Philip IV. ; Cromwell ruled England in his own name ; the Emperor of Germany, Ferdinand II., was almost imbecile : Christina alone maintained the regal dignity in her own person. Her first actions, private and public, were wise and beneficent. She added to her fleet, and invited skilful shipwrights from Holland. She made some excellent regulations with regard to the commerce, taxes, and coin of her kingdom. In her minority she had founded the University of Abo, in Finland : she now endowed it richly, and established there a valuable library, which in a few years amounted to ten thousand volumes. She also added to the revenues and privileges of the University of Upsal, and founded an academy of literature at Stockholm.

The celebrated Hugo Grotius had been patronised by her father, Gustavus Adolphus, and during her minority had been taken into the service of Sweden, and appointed by Oxenstiern ambassador to France. He returned from his embassy in the

first year of her reign, and she received him with all the distinction due to his uncommon merit. After he had rendered an account of the affairs entrusted to him, he entreated permission to resign his offices. To the queen he pleaded his broken health; and to Oxenstiern the deep disgust and weariness with which his long diplomatic career had inspired him. Christina gave him to understand how much his continuance in her service would gratify her; but as he persisted in his wish, she presented him with a gratuity of 12,000 crowns, and dismissed him with honour. Grotius died within a few months afterwards,* and Christina wrote to his widow a feeling and elegant letter, purchased the whole of his library and MSS. for a large sum of money, and presented them to the University of Upsal. The fame of this well-timed munificence was quickly spread through Europe, at a period when the name of Hugo Grotius was most illustrious in politics and literature.

In the meantime the war with Denmark proceeded, and the Swedish troops had gained signal advantages under Torstenson. But notwithstanding Christina's hereditary predilection for war, her admiration of Condé, who was her hero *par excellence*, and her oft-repeated wish that she might one day head her own armies, she had sufficient sense to perceive that peace had become necessary to her kingdom, and that, in order to establish her authority at home, it was necessary to have tranquillity abroad: she entrusted to Oxenstiern the care of concluding a treaty with Denmark. It was signed in 1645, on terms so advantageous to Sweden, and so satisfactory to Christina, that, on the chancellor's return, she presented him with a large estate, created him a count, and, on investing him with the title, pronounced his eulogium in the assembled senate, after the manner of the ancient Greeks and Romans.

In the course of the same year, as Christina herself informs us, she was "seized with a sickness almost to death, through fatigue and application to business;" nor can we wonder at this, when we are assured that for many months she never slept more than from three to five hours out of the twenty-four.

Christina was content to share with her Chancellor Oxenstiern

* In August 1645.

the merit of concluding the treaty with Denmark ;—it was not so with the grand general pacification of Europe which put an end to the *Thirty Years' War*, and which is called in history the Peace of Westphalia. The ministers of the various European powers met at Munster, and afterwards at Osnaburg, and the negotiations lasted more than six years. Christina was represented in this Congress by John Oxenstiern, the son of the chancellor, and Adler Salvius ; and her correspondence with these two ministers affords the strongest proof of her talents, her political sagacity, her impatience of temper, and her determination of purpose. Young as she was, and naturally frank and magnanimous, Christina seems thus early to have learned and adopted one paltry art of government, that of sowing secret dissension among her ministers, in order to retain the principal power in her own hands. In this manner she opposed Salvius to Oxenstiern, whom she suspected of wilfully retarding the negotiations, as his father, the chancellor, was known to differ from her relative to the expediency of the peace. The reasons he opposed to this, her favourite object, were probably worthy of so great and profound a statesman ; and had the war continued, it might have added to the possessions of Sweden, and have placed her in a yet more commanding situation with regard to the rest of Europe. But a single defeat in a pitched battle must have lost her all the advantages hitherto gained ; and Christina, who had heard of nothing but war since she was an infant, began to be weary of the sound. She was, perhaps, too precipitate in hurrying on the conclusion of the treaty ; but a negotiation of six years would have wearied the patience of one far less impatient. Whatever might have been her motives, history cannot deny her the true glory, so becoming to her sex and to her age of having contributed mainly to this great peace, which after many delays and difficulties, and calling forth all the talent and diplomatic subtlety of the greatest statesmen in Europe, was at length signed in 1649.* At the time that

* The Congress of Westphalia was the greatest ever known in modern Europe, and the most important in its results until the Congress at Vienna in 1814.

England was convulsed by civil wars, and France distracted by factions, as sanguinary as they were inglorious,—that Germany lay desolate, and Spain was humbled,—a young queen of three-and-twenty dictated from her little kingdom terms to all Europe, and, stretching forth her sceptre, commanded peace. There is another circumstance connected with this famous treaty which is worth remembering. The Thirty Years' War had been caused principally by the influence of a woman, an amiable and a conscientious woman;* who, could she have foreseen the consequences of her fatal advice,—could she have looked into futurity, and beheld the torrents of human blood poured forth like water,—the millions of lives sacrificed,—the burnings and massacres of Tilly and his fierce soldiery,—the desolation of her people,—the flames of her own palace† (that palace into which she had been led in triumph a beloved and honoured bride!),—and herself a wandering beggar from city to city,—she must have died with horror on the spot. Two women healed, or, at least, ended the miseries of which she had been the unconscious but most fatal and wretched instrument. It is generally allowed that the Peace of Westphalia had never been concluded but for Christina of Sweden and Amelia the Landgravine of Hesse, another extraordinary woman, at a period when female influence seemed openly to rule the destinies of Europe.‡

The news of the ratification of the peace was brought to Stockholm on the 31st of October, 1648, and was celebrated

* Elizabeth of Bohemia (eldest daughter of James I.), who advised her husband Frederick, the Elector Palatine, to accept the contested crown of Bohemia: this led to the war.

† The castle of Heidelberg, twice sacked during the Thirty Years' War. The library of MSS., then the richest in Europe except the Vatican, served Tilly's dragoons as litter for their horses,—a fate even more ignoble than that of the library of Alexandria, which was used as fuel for the public baths.

‡ The French historians claim part of the glory for the Queen-Regent of France, Anne of Austria; but she was more an agent in the hands of her ministers, while the others were women whose talents and personal character exercised a direct and acknowledged power over the affairs of Europe.

by Christina with public rejoicings. She did not, however, easily forgive the Chancellor Oxenstiern for having contradicted her in this affair ; and the whole of that powerful family, notwithstanding the eminent services they had rendered their country, were for some time treated with a coolness as capricious and ungrateful as it was undeserved.

Peace being concluded, the states-general entreated Christina to acquiesce in the wishes of her people, and secure the tranquillity of the country, by giving them a king. They proposed, as a proper object of her choice, her cousin, Charles Gustavus, a prince of great bravery and accomplishments, who had been born and educated in Sweden. His mother, the Princess Catherine, having been governess to Christina, had not neglected the opportunity thus afforded her of cultivating in the mind of her pupil a predilection for her son : he had been the playfellow of the young queen in her childhood, and she had then in sport promised to marry him, and was accustomed to call him her "little husband." He was the only one among her suitors for whom she seems to have entertained a real and personal regard. Prince Charles pressed his own suit gallantly ; but though favoured by her in every other respect, she never, from the time she was able to feel and reflect as a woman, committed herself by a single word on which he could build a hope as a lover. When, in 1647, the prince was appointed general-in-chief of the Swedish forces in Germany (an office which shows at once the high trust which Christina reposed in him, and the wish to remove him for a while from her presence), he had a parting interview with the queen, and took advantage of the moment to draw from her, if possible, some expressions of tenderness : he reminded her of her childish preference, her infant promise to him ; and he entreated her not to allow him to depart without knowing what hopes he might venture to entertain. The queen, in reply, desired him to rest no hopes whatever on the early preference she had confessed for him, nor on any promise made at a time when she could not properly be responsible for any engagement. She insisted that everything which had ever passed between them should be forgotten, or considered as null and void. At the same time she intimated

gently that she would declare her final intentions when she had completed her twenty-fifth year (she was now in her twenty-first) and had celebrated her coronation ; and she promised him, that if then she did not marry *him*, she would not marry at all, and would take such measures as should secure his succession to the throne. To this Charles replied in a very loverlike style, "that if she refused to accept him as a husband, he would reject the crown she offered him, on any other terms." Christina gaily reproached him with being so "romanesque" in his ideas ; but as he eagerly continued the same protestations, she stopped him, with something of her usual haughtiness, reminding him, that if he should even die before the period she had mentioned, it was sufficient honour for him that he had been thought worthy of pretending to the hand of so great a queen : and with these words she dismissed him.*

To the repeated remonstrances of the senate and clergy Christina replied in the same ambiguous manner ; and to those of her courtiers and confidants (the French minister Chanut being among the number) who ventured to express their surprise at her conduct she replied in terms which showed how deep-rooted was her disgust at the idea of giving herself a master, or even a partner in power. When they pressed upon her the expediency of marrying in order to ensure an heir to the crown, she answered, "*Il pourrait aussi facilement naître de moi un Néron qu'un Auguste.*" Unreasonable as this conduct may seem, Christina in this one instance maintained her consistency ; and there was something in her resolute frankness more honest and respectable than the continual trifling and absurd coquetry of Queen Elizabeth.

Christina kept her word with Prince Charles, and one of her first cares was to have him acknowledged by the states as her successor to the crown : the high sense of honour, the spirit, resolution, and dexterity with which she accomplished her purpose would have been admirable, but for the usual mixture of

* The Count de la Gardie and her preceptor Mathias were both present during this singular conference ; and Charles Gustavus left a memorandum of what passed, in his own hand writing, which was copied by Puffendorf.

impatience, selfishness, and arrogance, which she displayed on the occasion. The senate, before they would consent to ratify the nomination, required absolutely some pledge relative to her marriage, which she as peremptorily refused. The Bishop Mathias (her old preceptor) ventured to hint, that the constitution of the kingdom "*obliged* her to marry : " it was like putting the spark to the gunpowder. "Who," she exclaimed, "who upon earth shall *oblige* me to do so, if I do it not of my own free will? Until you consent to my wishes in this matter, do not think to draw from me one word on the subject of marriage. I do not deny that I may one day marry ; the good of my kingdom is a powerful motive; but I will not be bound: *nor heaven nor earth shall force my will!*" "All Europe," said the bishop, "have for years regarded the prince as your Majesty's destined husband. What will be said and thought when this extraordinary arrangement becomes public?" To which the queen replied, "What care I? when people are tired of talking about me and my affairs, they will find some other subject of conversation." The council entreated time ; she insisted that the affair should be settled immediately, still holding out some hope that she should subsequently yield to their wishes, and repeating frequently that if ever she married she would give her hand to Prince Charles, "*foi d'honnête femme!*"—"I believe," said the Constable Torstenson, "that the prince will never marry at all, unless accepted by your Majesty." "Yes," replied the queen sarcastically, "*la couronne est une jolie fille!*" intimating probably a suspicion that the affections of the prince were fixed upon her crown, not upon herself. This idea, whether infused into her mind by Magnus de la Gardie, or a discovery for which she was indebted to her own quick and jealous penetration, had shocked her personal pride, without rendering her less anxious to secure the throne to Prince Charles. She had not only bound herself by a solemn promise to him ; she also feared that the states would declare the crown elective in favour of some other candidate, and thus strike at the very foundation of the regal power. For these reasons, although her resolution was already formed, she eluded all expression of her real intentions, and by a conduct at once resolute and artful she at length carried her point ; the act declaring Charles Crown Prince of Sweden,

that is heir apparent to the throne, was agreed to by the Diet and signed in March 1650.

When the deed of succession was brought to the Chancellor Oxenstiern for his signature, the old man wept, and protested against it; he regarded it as the preliminary step to Christina's ultimate purpose, of which his sagacity foresaw the consequences.

The conduct of Charles was throughout a masterpiece of policy: concealing a most aspiring and ambitious character under a calm and submissive exterior, he appeared merely to resign himself to the will of Christina, and, conscious how far he still depended on her caprice, he was careful not to awaken that jealousy of power which she carried to a childish excess.* On giving up his military command, he lived in retirement, never took the slightest interest in any affair of the government, nor appeared in court unless expressly invited. By this discretion he maintained himself in the good graces of the queen, till it was no longer necessary to wear the mask; and the supposition that she afterwards repented of her act in his favour, and wished to substitute Count Tott, though very consistent with her capricious character, seems to rest on no authority.†

The next event of importance was her coronation, which was celebrated at Stockholm with the utmost pomp and solemnity, on the 20th of October, 1650. On this occasion Christina's love of classical antiquity induced her to give her people the novel spectacle of a Roman triumph, as described in Plutarch. Crowned with laurels, and sparkling with jewels, she paraded the streets of her capital, seated in a car drawn by four white horses; her treasurer marched before, scattering medals among the populace, and the heralds proclaimed her, according to the custom of the country, KING of Sweden. The festivities continued for several days, during which shows were exhibited to the people, and masques, ballets, and banquets daily took place

* For instance, she would never permit any of her courtiers to accept of foreign orders of knighthood, saying, "*Mes moutons ne doivent pas être marqués d'une main étrangère.*"

† Archenholtz.—It may have originated in the fact that Christina afterwards wished the succession to be secured to Count Tott in case Prince Charles died without heirs.

at court : there were also reviews, mock fights, riding at the ring, and other military sports, at which the queen distributed the prizes ; and Prince Charles and the young Landgrave of Hesse were particularly distinguished by their gallantry, the splendour of their habits, and the number and magnificence of their retinues. But that which caused the greatest delight and astonishment, was a glittering triumphal chariot, which moved along the arena upon hidden springs ; and in the same manner an artificial mountain, forty feet in height, representing Mount Parnassus, was seen to glide, self-impelled, before the wondering spectators, while on its summit a company of musicians, habited as Apollo and the Muses, filled the air with harmony. Orations in almost every known language were pronounced, celebrating the greatness, the virtues, the charms, and the learning of the queen ; and a lofty pyramid, which, according to a pompous (and lying) classical inscription, was erected to the honour of Christina by Antiope, Penthesilea, and Thalestris, the three queens of the Amazons, was constructed as a memorial of these festivities.

The character of these exhibitions sufficiently indicates the taste which had for a long time prevailed in the court of Sweden. After the year 1648 we find Christina almost entirely devoted to study and literature, even to the exclusion of the duties and cares of government. She carried on a diligent correspondence with many of the most eminent literati of Europe ; among others, with Gassendi, Menage, and Blaise Pascal, names still celebrated : she was surrounded by learned men, *soi-disant* philosophers, and professors in every branch of science, whom she attracted to her court by gifts, by pensions, or by promises, and whose interested and extravagant flattery completely bewildered a head already half turned by vanity, unrestricted power, and indulged self-will. She collected manuscripts, books, and medals, and sent commissioners into Italy and other countries, to purchase pictures, sculptures, and other rarities of art. These pursuits, in themselves praiseworthy, were carried to an excess which rendered them ridiculous and blameable. Not having herself the experience and taste to which she pretended, she was pillaged and cheated to an incredible extent. It is said that, at the instigation of one of the antiquarian

pedants in her court, she offered 30,000 florins for a bronze medal of Otho ; on another occasion, when some fine and valuable pictures arrived from Italy, this Queen of the Goths had them cut down to a uniform size, to fit certain panels in one of the royal apartments.

The style of learning and philosophy which prevailed in Christina's court seems to have been precisely that which Molière has so happily ridiculed in the "*Femmes savantes*," and which is now out of date,—a mixture of scholastic pedantry and elaborate trifling.

On looking over the list of *savans*, who were entertained in the Swedish court, we find few of any real merit or celebrity : there are two or three, however, who deserve, to be more particularly noticed. Of these, one of the most remarkable was De Saumaise, better known by his Latin appellation, Salmasius, as the political and literary antagonist of Milton : the erudition of this man was wonderful—"almost," says Johnson, "exceeding all hope of human attainment ;" and since the death of Grotius had left him without a rival, he had reigned, not only the monarch, but the tyrant of literature. He was a proof, were any proof wanted, that the true value of all human knowledge consists in its application ; instead of being numbered among those "great and good men whose published labours have advanced the good of posterity," he has sunk into a mere name, which is only interesting as associated with that of Milton ; while the one blot upon the pure and transcendent fame of the poet is connected with the name of Salmasius. Isaac Vossius, a very celebrated theologian, antiquarian, and critic of the time, was another whom Christina particularly distinguished. The private character of both these men was hateful, and they are supposed to have exercised a most mischievous influence on the mind of the young queen. It appears that they first unsettled her religious opinions, and blunted her moral feelings, by continually occupying her with idle metaphysical disputes, under pretence of studying philosophy.

Descartes, who had often declared that he valued his liberty at so high a rate, that no monarch of Europe could buy it from him, was at length induced, by the flattering and earnest entreaties of Christina, to visit her capital. He fondly believed

that he had insured his independence, by stipulating that he should be exempted from all court ceremonial. The queen consented ; but she required his attendance in her library every morning at five o'clock. The unhappy philosopher, whose health was extremely delicate, was obliged to comply with his despotic patroness. These early hours, and the extreme coldness of the climate, threw him into a consumptive disorder : his malady was increased by the haughtiness and negligence with which Christina resented his admiration of the Princess Palatine ;* and at the end of four months he died at Stockholm.

The want of judgment which Christina displayed in the choice of some of her literary favourites, her capricious treatment of others,† the immense sums she lavished upon them, either to purchase or to reward their venal flattery,—their mutual hatred and envy,—their disputes, which often embroiled her court,—instead of introducing among the Swedes, who were a plain, rough, straightforward people, any taste or reverence for literature, tended to degrade it in their eyes, dissipated the treasures of the state, and lowered Christina both in their estimation and their love.

It was in the year 1651 that Christina began to entertain seriously the idea of resigning her crown : the remonstrances of the senate and the arguments of Oxenstiern, who rose from a bed of sickness to combat her intention, induced her to lay it aside for the present ; but her resolution was taken, and the contradiction she met with only served to confirm it.

In the same year an accident occurred which gave her an opportunity of displaying that intrepidity for which she was remarkable, though it had nearly terminated her life and reign together. One day when she was preparing to visit her fleet in the harbour of Stockholm, and passing along a narrow plank laid from her barge to the vessel, the admiral, Herman Fleming, upon whose arm she leaned, slipped from his footing, and they were both precipitated into the water, which was there thirty feet

* The eldest daughter of Elizabeth of Bohemia.

† She made Naudé and Meibom, two famous Greek scholars, execute a Greek dance for her amusement ; and Bochart, one of the gravest and most profound scholars of the time, play with her at battledore and shuttlecock.—*Vide* Bayle.

deep. The queen was extricated with some difficulty by her equerry, Antony Steinberg, for the admiral had seized her petticoat, and held it fast. Christina, without losing her presence of mind, desired them to save the admiral, who had sunk ; and when those about her blamed him for his conduct in seizing her dress, and thus endangering her life, she excused him on the principle of self-preservation ; and added, laughing, that he deserved praise rather than blame, for he had certainly been drowned had he acted otherwise. She afterwards changed her dress with her usual celerity, and dined in public as if nothing had happened. This was not her only escape : the year before her coronation, as she was at prayers in her chapel, a wretched maniac forced his way through the guards and attendants, and attempted to strike at her with a knife, but was seized and disarmed by Count Brahé : the queen immediately perceiving his real condition, would not allow him to be hurt, and he was placed under proper restraint.

The conduct of Christina during the next two or three years of her life exhibits a tissue of inexplicable extravagance : in most of her actions, private and political, we see such madness of self-will, such a total disregard to principle and consistency, that she can only be excused by the admission that her intellect was in some degree disordered. One of the most unaccountable of all her caprices was her partiality for a French physician named Michon Bourdelot, who had been introduced to her by M. De Saumaise, and, on his recommendation, entertained in her service. He was an ignorant, intriguing, impudent quack, who by mere assurance, and the most superficial powers of pleasing,* obtained an extraordinary ascendancy in her court and councils. This man persuaded her that study would injure her health, induced her to throw aside her books, to banish, or neglect, or insult with ridicule the learned men she had invited to her court, and led her into a thousand follies. All those who possessed or deserved the esteem and confidence of the queen

* "Il savait chanter de petits airs, il jouait de la guitare ; il s'entendait en toutes sortes de parfums ; il n'ignorait pas mener la cuisine ; mais pour ce qui était de belles lettres et de sciences solides, il n'en avait presque point de teinture."—*Vide Mémoires de Christine.*

he contrived either to render ridiculous, or to undermine by the most artful slanders. Among others, Count Magnus de la Gardie, who had so long held the post of chief favourite, and was at this time high treasurer and master of the royal household, began to lose his credit with the queen; and his own indiscretion aiding the machinations of his secret enemy, he became the object of a contempt and aversion as inexplicable, and apparently as unmerited, as his extreme favour had been before. It is said that Bourdelot first taught the queen to swear—an accomplishment in which she afterwards excelled.

The queen-dowager venturing to remonstrate against the power exercised by this unworthy foreigner, Christina replied with a degree of arrogance and harshness which silenced her mother; and she retained Bourdelot in her court till her ministers, her nobility, and even her people, murmured so loudly that she resolved to send him to France, loaded, however, with presents and marks of her favour, and with a hope of being soon recalled. But he was scarce out of sight when he was forgotten. The first letter she received from this *ci-devant* favourite she threw from her with disgust, exclaiming, "Fi! cela sent la rhubarbe!" Bourdelot, on his arrival in France, found himself completely neglected; and he died in obscurity. His influence lasted not more than a year and a half; and during that period a great part of the magnificent library which Christina had collected at such an immense cost was pillaged by her learned *protégés*, and the most valuable manuscripts stolen or dispersed.

On the disgrace of Magnus de la Gardie, and the banishment of Bourdelot, the old Chancellor Oxenstiern and his sons regained their former influence at court; but the person who succeeded to all the favour and confidence which had been possessed by the Count Magnus, M. Chanut, and Bourdelot, was Don Antonio Pimentelli, the Spanish ambassador, a man of the most consummate political address and the most insinuating manners. Through his intrigues the Spanish and Austrian interests triumphed over those of France, and he is supposed to have fixed the wavering opinions of the queen in favour of the Roman Catholic religion.

Although Christina resumed her literary pursuits after the

departure of her "*agréable ignorant*," as she used to call Bourdelot, she became every day more disgusted with the duties of her situation, and the necessity of attending to a certain routine of affairs fatigued and irritated her, merely because it was an obligation: one of her secretaries appearing before her with some despatches which required her signature, she turned from him impatiently, and said to Prince Charles, who was present, "Will you never deliver me from these people? *ce sont pour moi le diable !*" She amused herself with inventing masques and ballets, in which she often sustained a principal part; * and she ennobled a great number of persons, whose merit did not always, as in the case of Salvius, justify the enormous abuse of this royal privilege.

In the meantime the affairs of her kingdom became more and more entangled; the revenues were exhausted, the crown lands alienated by her profusion; there remained nothing more for her to bestow, and in case of a war no revenues to support it. Abuses and delays had crept into the administration, which she had not the patience, if she had the power, to remedy: she became moody and unequal in temper; she was at once jealous of her authority, and weary of the duties and restraints it imposed. She had dreamed over the classic poets till she fancied she could only be happy in a southern climate, and sighed for the ease and independence of a private station. Her lively imagination wanted some excitement, and the renunciation of the crown, at the age of twenty-eight, was the grand *coupe de théâtre* with which she now chose to dazzle and astonish all Europe.

In 1654, when she first openly declared her intention of abdicating the throne, the principal members of the senate, with Oxenstiern at their head, endeavoured to dissuade her from her purpose; but in vain. Prince Charles added his entreaties, and besought her to retain in her own possession the sceptre she intended to resign to him, or at least to allow

* On one of these occasions, after performing in a pastoral the character of Amarantha, she instituted the order of the Amarantha: it included both sexes, and she bestowed it on the principal persons of her court and several of the foreign ambassadors.

him to share her throne as a husband, while the supreme power remained with herself; but she persisted in her resolution. On the 21st of May, 1654, in a solemn assemblage of the states-general at Upsal, she formally tendered her resignation of the crown, and in an eloquent speech, after recapitulating her own royal virtues, and all she had performed for the good of her people, she recommended her successor, the hereditary Prince Charles, to their loyalty and affection. After she had pronounced this harangue in a firm voice, the president of the senate arose, and in the name of the nobles entreated her to think better of her design, and to continue to reign over them. The Archbishop of Upsal remonstrated in the name of the clergy, and the president of the burghers made a speech to the same purpose. What followed cannot be better related than in the words of Whitelocke, who was then ambassador from Cromwell to the Swedish court, and was treated by Christina with great distinction. He was an eye-witness of the scene, which is thus related in his journal :—

“In the last place stepped forth the marshal of the boors, a plain country fellow, in his clouted shoon, and all other habits answerable, as all the rest of the company were accoutred. This boor, without any congees or ceremonies at all, spake to her Majesty, and his address was interpreted to Whitelocke to be after this phrase :—

“O Lord God, madam, what do you mean to do? It humbles us to heare you speak of forsaking those who love you as well as we do : can you be better than you are? You are queen of all these countries ; and if you leave this large kingdom, where will you get such another? If you should do it (as I hope you won't for all this), both you and we shall have cause, when it is too late, to be sorry for it ; therefore my fellows and I pray you think better on't, and keep your crown on your head ; then you will keep your own honour and our peace : but if you lay it down, in my conscience, you will endanger all.

“Continue in your gears, good madam, and be the fore-horse as long as you live, and we will help you the best we can to bear your burthen. Your father was an honest gentleman and a good king, and very shining in the world, and we obeyed him and loved him as long as he lived ; and you are his child.

and have governed us very well, and we love you with all our hearts ; and the prince is an honest gentleman, and when his time comes, we shall be ready to do our duties to him, as we do to you. But as long as you live we are unwilling to part with you ; and therefore, I pray, madam, do not part with us.'

"When the boor had ended his speech, he waddled up to the queen without any ceremony, took her by the hand, and shook it heartily, and kist it two or three times ; then turning his back to her, he pulled out of his pocket a foul handkerchief, and wiped the tears from his eyes, and in the same posture as he came up he returned back to his place again." *

Whitelocke does not tell us whether Christina was touched by the homely eloquence of this honest peasant ; but nothing could now alter her resolution. On the 6th of June following she appeared in the hall of assembly, habited in her robes of state, the crown on her brow, and the sceptre in her hand. She took her seat on the throne for the last time, and Count Rosenhane read aloud the act by which she formally renounced the crown on the following conditions :—"That her cousin Prince Charles Gustavus should succeed her ; that a revenue of 240,000 rix dollars should be secured to her, arising from certain lands and estates, of which she was to have the entire disposal for life, but was not to alienate them from the crown of Sweden ; that she should continue to exercise all the rights of sovereignty and jurisdiction over her own household, acknowledging no human control over her actions, and have full liberty to fix her residence in any country of Europe." On these conditions, which were solemnly ratified by the senate and by her successor, Christina released her subjects from their oath of allegiance, and laid down the ensigns of royalty. It was remarked that none of her attendants would lift the crown from her head ; she was obliged to take it off herself, and deliver it to Prince Charles, who received it kneeling, and would never wear it in her presence.† The spectators and attendants who stood round

* Whitelocke's Journal, vol. ii. p. 166.

† Charles flattered Christina's well-known foible by ordering a medal to be struck, in which he was represented on his knees, receiving the crown from the hands of the queen, with the inscription, "I hold it from God and from Christina."

her seized the royal mantle as she threw it off, and tore it into a thousand pieces, each anxious to obtain a fragment as a relic of their queen who was about to quit them for ever. On the same day Charles Gustavus was proclaimed King of Sweden by the title of Charles X., and Christina, in a few hours after the ceremony, left Upsal and returned to Stockholm. She did not, however, remain long there ; under pretence that the waters of Spa had been ordered for her health, she began her journey southwards.

It was not without reason that she hastened to quit her own kingdom after the step she had taken. The good people of Sweden could not well understand their queen's predilection for philosophy ; they were so unrefined as to see in her renunciation of her hereditary throne only the abandonment of great and solemn duties ; and in her preference of foreigners, foreign countries, foreign manners, an insult to themselves—a want of feeling as well as a want of patriotism. The idea that she was conveying out of the kingdom immense property, purchased with the gold which had been wrung from the necessities of the people, completed their disgust and indignation ; and it is certain that there were serious intentions of arresting her before she quitted the kingdom, and forcing her either to resume her crown, or to reside in her own country, or to give up the pension and the royal treasures she was carrying away.*

Christina herself was aware of her unpopularity, and so fearful of being detained, that she took a route different from that which she had first intended, and would not accept the escort of armed vessels with which Charles wished to have conveyed her in honour, if not in triumph, from the shores of Sweden ; her journey in fact resembled a flight. As long as she remained within the boundaries of her former kingdom, she appears to have been in terror from the threats of the lower orders of the people, and was careful not to shock public opinion, lest she should be delayed, and her plan of independence retarded or prevented ; but on reaching Collen, near the frontier, she threw

* She conveyed out of the kingdom more than one hundred bales of property, consisting of jewels, gold and silver plate, statues, pictures, books, and articles of value, to the amount of some millions of crowns.

off all restraint. Quitting her female attire, she assumed the dress and deportment of a man, sent away all her women, and retained in her service only four gentlemen of her suite, with a few inferior servants.* She generally travelled on horseback, under a feigned name, and passed the frontiers of her kingdom, not only without regret, but with a childish ecstasy, wishing she might never return to it, and glorying in her dear-bought freedom.

It is worthy of remark, that during the extraordinary scenes which attended and followed her abdication and departure, Christina never betrayed the least sign of emotion, hesitation, or repentance. She "played out the play" most unshrinkingly; but was in too great a hurry to be dignified; too impatient, too intent upon her selfish purpose, to show anything like feeling for others. It does not appear that, individually, any one regretted her, or that she regretted any one. She shed no tears on parting with Ebba Sparre, whom she loved as well as she could love anybody, but who did not return her attachment, and seems to have felt her departure a relief.† The only two persons who really grieved over her abdication were her mother and the old Chancellor Oxenstiern. From her mother, who was sick with grief, mortification, disappointment, and incessant weeping, she departed without a tear: the old chancellor, on pretence of illness, shut himself up, and refused to officiate at any of the ceremonies attending the coronation of the new king.

The subsequent life of this extraordinary woman proves that the education which had rendered her bold, restless, and self-willed, while it inculcated no principle of duty, as little fitted her to play the part of an individual, as to discharge the office of a sovereign.

Christina arrived at Hamburg on the 10th of July, and took up her residence at the house of her banker, the rich Jew Texiera. By this time reports had reached her former capital that she was going about in man's attire, and entertained thoughts of

* Her attendants were Count Dohna, her chamberlain; Count Steinberg, her equerry; Baron Soop; and another: not one of these knew whither they were going.

† Ebba Sparre was at this time the wife of Count Jacob de la Gardie, and the mother of two children. She died in 1662.

changing her religion ; the people were scandalized, and the senate would have withdrawn her revenues if Charles had not interfered. From Hamburg she continued her route towards the Netherlands, and the first place at which she made any considerable stay was at Antwerp. There her favourite hero, the Prince de Condé, for whom she had always professed a most romantic and enthusiastic admiration, wished to be introduced to her ; but Christina, though uncrowned, demurred on some points of court etiquette, and when they did meet it was with mutual coldness and constraint.*

On the day succeeding her public entry into Brussels, Christina executed a purpose which she had for some time meditated : she forsook the Lutheran faith in which she had been educated, the faith for which her illustrious father had fought and bled, and professed herself a convert to the Romish Church. She made her private recantation in presence of the Archduke Leopold, the ambassador Pimentelli, the Count Montecuculi, and others.

* Elizabeth, the ex-queen of Bohemia, and Christina of Sweden, met at Antwerp; there were several subjects of personal pique between these two queens, which prevented them from judging each other favourably ; and Christina's open admiration for Cromwell was a political offence hardly to be forgiven by the sister of Charles I. In the correspondence of the Queen of Bohemia there are some allusions to Christina, which are rather characteristic and amusing :—

“I saw the Queen of Sweden at the play ; she is extravagant in her fashion and apparel ; but she has a good, well-favoured face, and a mild countenance.”

“The French ambassador believes the treaty with Cromwell as good as broken. He is much joyed that the meeting betwixt the Queen of Sweden and the Prince of Condé was to neither of their content, for he desired to be received as the queen received the archduke, which she refused, saying she had done too much in that, and would do so no more : yet he came to see her *brusquement à l'improvist*, and did nothing but *railler* in his talk ; which put her so out, as she said almost not one word. This was the morning ; after dinner she sent to know if he would see the play at night : he said he would obey her, but desired to know whether he should come known or as unknown ; for if he came as *Prince of Condé*, he looked to have a *chaise-a-bras*, as the archduke had. She said, he had better come unknown ; so he came ; and she stood all the play, railing with *Monsieur Quito*, the prince's favourite,

There is every reason to believe, from the character and subsequent conduct of Christina, that this change of religion was rather the result of policy than of conviction. She had resolved upon fixing her residence in Italy, and wished to avoid the inconveniences and the constant jealousy to which an open profession of the Protestant faith would have exposed her in a Roman Catholic country. It was, however, the interest of the priests around her to represent her as a kind of martyr, one who had sacrificed her crown for the sake of religion; whereas it was very well known that her profession of the Roman Catholic faith was not the motive of her abdication, but rather its result. Bourdelot and Saumaise, by unsettling her religious opinions, had prepared the way for indifference and scepticism; and then her conversion, as a matter of expediency, was not difficult. The Pope, Alexander VII., who had lately ascended the papal chair, felt all the importance of such an illustrious proselyte, and ordered public thanksgiving at Rome. At Brussels, although her recantation was private, it was celebrated in the most ostentatious manner by balls, masquerades, hunting parties, and other amusements; and yet farther to honour so great, so *solemn* an occasion, Cardinal Mazarin sent from Paris a company of famous comedians, who entertained the court of Brussels with operas and plays, alternately in French and Italian. As these far surpassed anything Christina had seen in her own country, they seem to have given her particular pleasure. The perfect levity and indifference of her own deportment was quite consistent with the whole of this extraordinary exhibition, of which it is difficult to say whether it was most ridiculous or most

The next day the prince went to Brussels, and neither of them well satisfied with the other."

"The Queen of Sweden is now at Brussels, where she was received in great state. I believe the archduke wishes her at Antwerp, for she persecutes him very close with her company; and you know he is a very modest man."

"As for the archduke, he may thank God to be rid of the Queen of Sweden, who is lodged at the Count of Egmont's house, in Brussels, where she stays all the winter." (See letters from the Queen of Bohemia to Secretary Nicholas, in Evelyn's Correspondence.)

shocking. "S'il y a un Dieu, je serai bien attrapée," said she, after receiving absolution at the feet of Father Geumes the Dominican.*

The festivities at Brussels were interrupted by the news of her mother's death. The queen-dowager, unable to endure with fortitude her daughter's abdication, and cut to the heart by the indifference with which she had parted from her, had refused all comfort: she fell into a languishing distemper, of which she expired in March 1655. The same cause had shortened the life of the Chancellor Oxenstiern, who died a few weeks before her; he expired with the name of Christina on his lips: "Tell her," said he, "that she will repent of what she has done." Christina, though she sincerely regretted the chancellor, received the message with a smile—for the hour of repentance had not yet arrived.

We may form some idea of the little impression which Christina left behind her in Sweden, when we find that in the

* Of the scandalous indifference, the shallow levity with which Christina exchanged one profession of faith for another, we have a proof in the postscript of one of her letters to the Countess Ebba Sparre, written from Brussels about this time. It concludes with these words:—"Adieu, belle, souvenez-vous de votre Christine. Je vous supplie de faire mes amitiés à tous ceux qui sont de mes amis et amies, et même à tous ceux qui n'ont pas envie de l'être; je leur pardonne de tout mon cœur, aussi bien que je ne m'en trouve pas pire pour cela. J'oubliais de vous dire que je me porte parfaitement bien, que je reçois ici mille honneurs, et que je suis bien avec tout le monde, excepté le Prince de Condé, que je ne vois jamais qu'à la comédie et au cours. Mes occupations sont de bien manger, de bien dormir, étudier un peu, causer, rire, et voir les comédies Françaises, Italiennes et Espagnoles, et à passer le temps agréablement. Enfin, je n'écoute plus des sermons, je méprise tous les orateurs, après ce que dit Salomon, tout le reste n'est que sottise, car chacun doit vivre content en mangeant, buvant et chantant." In much the same spirit, when the archduke Leopold inquired what confessor or chaplain she had brought in her train, she replied negligently that in travelling from Sweden she had got rid of all useless lumber. This was the proselyte whom the Jesuits talked of *canonizing*! "Your Majesty shall hereafter be placed among the saints," exclaimed a Jesuit, who was preaching before her. "J'aime mieux qu'on me mette entre les sages!" said Christina, with one of her sarcastic smiles.

space of nine or ten months after her departure, Count Brahé was the only person from whom she received the slightest token of remembrance. When, however, the news of her conversion was brought to Stockholm, the people seemed to feel that the national honour was wounded by her apostasy. Their indignation fell upon Mathias, the first preceptor of the queen, whom they accused of not having sufficiently guarded her mind against the entrance of error; and, notwithstanding his eloquent defence, he was disgraced and deprived of his bishopric. Many members of the senate did not scruple to assert that she ought to be deprived of the revenues which had been granted to her, so that Christina began to feel already by how uncertain a tenure she held the very means of subsistence. She wrote to her cousin, King Charles, appealing to his gratitude and recommending her interests to his protection. But no care or thought of the future appears at this time to have disturbed her gaiety. During her stay at Brussels she lived with royal magnificence, lavishing immense sums in gifts to priests, poets, courtiers, comedians, and parasites, until the ready money she had brought from Sweden was nearly exhausted. She then turned her thoughts towards Italy. She had received the most pressing invitations from the Pope to take up her residence in his capital, and at length, on the 22d of September, 1665, she quitted Brussels to proceed to Rome. Her suite consisted of about two hundred persons, principally Austrians and Spaniards; there were also four Swedish gentlemen of quality, and two ladies of honour; the latter more for show than use, as the queen neither noticed them nor required their services.

At Frankfort, Charles II. and his brother, then exiles from England, visited her incognito: she refused to see them openly, lest she should give umbrage to Cromwell. From Frankfort she proceeded to Augsburg, where, on being shown the table at which her father had dined after the battle which made him master of all Bavaria, she burst into tears.

At Inspruck, she repeated more publicly her abjuration of the Protestant faith, and was solemnly received into the bosom of the Roman Catholic faith. Several of the archdukes and and others of the imperial family, and a great number of the German nobility, had assembled at Inspruck on this occasion.

Here, as at Brussels, her conversion was solemnized by banquets, balls, illuminations, and comedies ; and such was the pomp and magnificence with which she was surrounded that Christina, a queen and a *philosopheress*, was dazzled and turned giddy. She was heard to repeat, with evident and childish pleasure, "*O che bella! bella!*" Meantime her own deportment was not more decorous than formerly. On the evening of the same day on which she had made a solemn profession of faith in the cathedral at Inspruck, she was taken to a comedy prepared for her amusement : " 'Tis but fair," said she to those around her, "that you should treat me to comedy, after I have treated you to a farce."

After a stay of eight days at Inspruck, she continued her journey, being everywhere received with the honours due to her, and gazed on with wonder and curiosity. On the 19th of December, 1655, she made her public entry into Rome, mounted on a white horse, *à la cavalière*, and surrounded by all the principal nobility and clergy : she was conducted, amidst incessant discharges of artillery, and with every mark of honour and of triumph, to St. Peter's, where she was received and confirmed by the Pope, and had the honour of kissing his slipper. We are told that the Roman ladies were extremely astonished at the masculine attitude and dress of Christina, who entered Rome not as a convert and a penitent, but rather as a victorious empress, triumphing as the conquerors of old ; but on being told that she had made war on the King of Denmark, they thought her Amazonian appearance perfectly natural. When the festivities with which her first arrival was celebrated left her at leisure, Christina took up her residence in the Palazzo Farnese, and spent some months in visiting the curiosities and antiquities of Rome, and in receiving the compliments of the learned men and the various academies.

It appears, that after the first sensations of excitement and interest were over, the Romans began to view their new visitor and proselyte with more wonder than approbation. Her extreme levity—not exactly of conduct, but of language and of manner—scandalized the people ; and the haughty indifference, and even contempt, with which she treated the nobles and the women of the highest rank, gave great offence. Her tranquillity

and her independence were daily troubled by the dissensions of her household, and the want of money. Her revenue from Sweden was not punctually paid; and instead of the learned leisure, the pleasures and amusements in which she had expected to indulge, she found herself beset by vexation and difficulties, such as she had never anticipated, and which her proud, careless spirit was ill calculated to endure. She wrote from Rome to Ebba Sparre, and although she would not confess her mortification and disappointment, the melancholy tone of her letter forms a striking contrast with that which she had written from Brussels but a few months before. Soon afterwards she was seized with a dangerous disorder, from which she recovered with difficulty.

In August 1656, on pretence of escaping from the malaria, she left Rome, and proceeded to Paris, whither she had been invited by the French court: to defray the expenses of this journey, she was under the necessity of pawning her jewels for 12,000 ducats, so low was she reduced in purse and credit. The King of France sent the Duke of Guise to receive her, and commanded that everywhere the same honours should be paid as to a crowned head, so that her progress through the French provinces, from Marseilles to Paris, resembled a triumphal procession rather than a journey.

Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who met her at Fontainebleau, has left us, in her entertaining, gossiping memoirs, an account of her interview, and of the person, dress, and manners of Christina, at this time: she was now in her thirtieth year. "I had heard," says Mademoiselle, "so much of her *bizarries* that I was afraid lest, on seeing her for the first time, I should have laughed in her face; but though she astonished me beyond measure, it was not in a manner to provoke a smile. She was of a small, slight figure, a little deformed, with light eyes, an aquiline nose, a large mouth, fine teeth, and a very expressive countenance: her dress was a short grey petticoat, laced with gold and silver; a flame-coloured doublet, also laced with gold, a lace cravat, and a black hat, with a plume of feathers." Her manners were coarse and masculine; she swore commonly, laughed loud, astonished Mademoiselle de Montpensier by throwing her legs over the arm of her chair,

and was sometimes seized with strange fits of absence, from which she would recover as from a dream. While they were looking at some fireworks, one or two of the rockets fell near them. The princess started and shrunk back ; on which Christina laughed without ceremony, saying that, for her part, she knew not what fear was : and that there was nothing she so much longed for as to be present at a battle ; that she should not die content unless this wish was gratified. She professed an unbounded contempt for her own sex ; and her conversation, though full of vivacity, was so eccentric and audacious, that it put even men out of countenance. On the 8th of September she made her public entry into Paris : she was received on this occasion with all the honours due to her as a sovereign, and all the chivalrous gallantry which was then the fashion in the French court, and was supposed to be due to her, as a queen and a woman. She was preceded by a body of a thousand cavalry, and was herself mounted on a superb white charger, in her usual masculine attire, and with pistols at her saddle-bow ; by her side rode the Duc de Guise ; and fifty picked men of the royal body-guard, and fifty of the king's pages, were in attendance on her person. There was also an immense number of the nobility mounted or in carriages ; while an innumerable multitude of people, collected together by their own curiosity, as well as by the king's proclamation, rent the air with shouts, and regarded her extraordinary appearance and Amazonian dress and deportment with an astonishment not unmingled with admiration. Christina, who, with all her philosophy, appears to have been childishly susceptible to external excitement, looked round her with extreme self-complacency. It was the last time that she was destined to wear her regal honours publicly. At the gate of Paris she was met by the Mareschal d'Hôpital, who conducted her first to the church of Notre Dame, where a solemn *Te Deum* was performed ; thence to the Louvre, where she was lodged and entertained with truly royal magnificence. The same day she was visited by Henrietta Maria of England, the nobility, the principal clergy, and a deputation from the French Academy. After remaining at Paris three days, during which time she was absolutely besieged by addresses, visits,

public speeches, and honours and flatteries in every form, she set off for Compeigne, where the court then resided. On the road she dined and slept at Chantilly, where she was met by Cardinal Mazarin. Here the young king and his brother mingled incognito with the crowd which surrounded her, and were introduced by the Cardinal as two gentlemen of rank: but the penetration of Christina was not at fault; she immediately recognised them, and addressed the king as "*Mon frère*," but without otherwise designating his quality. It is remarked, as an instance of her singular power of fascinating those whom she wished to please, that Louis, who was only nineteen, at that time timid in all female society, and as shy as excessive pride and a consciousness of his own neglected education could make him, was won by this philosophical Amazon. She placed him at his ease by the frankness of her own manner, and by some well-timed compliments; and from the first moment they conversed together with mutual pleasure. After this interview, the king galloped back to Compeigne.*

The next day, Christina proceeded on her journey, accompanied by Cardinal Mazarin; and a few leagues from Compeigne was met by the queen-mother, Anne of Austria, the king, the princes, and the chief persons of the royal household. The interview took place at the house of the Mareschal de la Motte-Houdancourt. Christina was attended by the Duc de Guise and the celebrated Duc de la Rochefoucauld. She had no suite, except two or three persons hardly above the rank of menial servants. "Herself alone," says Madame de Motteville, "composed her whole court." The same lady, who was an eye-witness of this interview, which she describes in her memoirs with many picturesque circumstances, confesses, that at the first glance the Queen of Sweden not only surprised but almost terrified her. In truth, we can easily imagine that Christina, with her various eccentricities of dress and manner, and her total disregard to decorum, must have appeared in

* Voltaire says in the "*Siècle de Louis XIV.*," "that the king hardly spoke to her;" but this is contradicted by the testimony of those who were on the spot, and eye-witnesses.

the eyes of a lady of the bedchamber, in a magnificent and ceremonious court, as nothing less than portentous. On this occasion she had on a black wig, considerably disordered by the wind, and all awry on her head ; her complexion appeared coarse and sunburnt ; she had no gloves, and her hands were so dirty, that the original colour could not be distinguished ; she wore a shirt and a vest, after the masculine fashion, put on very negligently ; and a short grey petticoat, embroidered with gold and silver ; she held a riding-whip in her hand. Whatever might have been the amazement of Anne of Austria and her court at this strange apparition, for which no previous description could have prepared them, courtly etiquette forbade the slightest expression of it. The king himself, the most fastidious of men, took one of those unladylike hands, and led Christina forward into a saloon, where a splendid collation was served. The two queens, with the king and Monsieur, sat down to table, and the court stood round gazing on the stranger with unrepressed curiosity. Madame de Motteville observes that after the first half-hour her sentiments changed, and the same person, whom but a short time before she could have mistaken for “une Egyptienne dévergondée,” she could not help considering with interest, and even with admiration.”*

* “Je trouvais qu'elle avait les yeux beaux et vifs : qu'elle avait de la douceur dans le visage, et que cette douceur'était mêlée de fierté. Enfin je m'aperçus avec étonnement qu'elle me plaisait, et d'un instant à un autre je me trouvais entièrement changée pour elle.”—*Mémoires de Madame de Motteville*, iv. p. 427.

The following passages from the same work are amusing and characteristic :—

“On la mena à la Comédie italienne. Elle la trouva fort mauvaise, et le dit librement. On l'assura que les comédiens avaient accoutumé de mieux faire. Elle répondit froidement, qu'elle n'en doutait pas puisqu'on les gardait.”

“Elle fut à la chasse du sanglier où le Roi la convia d'aller. Elle lui avait dit néanmoins, quand on lui proposa d'y aller, qu'elle ne l'aimait point, parce qu'elle était périlleuse, qu'elle ne pouvait souffrir qu'on s'exposât à quelque péril que pour acquérir de la gloire (some philosophy in this).”

“Le soir à la Comédie française, elle montra d'avoir l'âme passionnée ; elle s'écria souvent sur les beaux endroits, paraissant sentir de la joie ou

The next day, when she appeared with her wig newly frizzled and powdered, her hands washed, and her dress adjusted with some regard to feminine propriety, she made a more favourable impression. Anne of Austria, on retiring to her chamber, confessed to her ladies that, though she was at first alarmed and disgusted, she could not resist the vivacity of Christina's manners, and the odd fascination which hung about her.

"'Twas thus *Christina* every heart alarmed ;
 Awed without virtue, without beauty charmed :
 Strange fancies still, and stranger flights she had ;
 Was just not ugly, and was just not mad." *

During her stay at the French court she had sufficient *tact* to avoid appearing pedantic ; she talked well upon every subject, and rallied those around her with much liveliness. She contrived at the same time to keep presumption at a distance and uncrowned, and unattended as she was, and in spite of a wry wig and dirty hands, "*elle faisait la maîtresse partout*," and put all etiquette out of countenance. After staying a week at Com-

de la douleur, selou les différens sentiments qui étaient exprimés par les vers qui se récitaient devant elle ; puis comme si elle eût été toute seule dans son cabinet, se laissant aller sur le dos de sa chaise, après ses exclamations, elle demeura dans une rêverie profonde. La Reine même ne l'en pouvait tirer, quoique souvent elle voulut lui parler.

"Son extérieur, à qui on eût voulu juger à son désavantage, était digne de risée et de moquerie. Presque toutes ses actions avaient quelque chose d'extravagant, et on pouvait avec justice la blâmer comme on pouvait avec sujet la louer extrêmement. Elle ne ressemblait en rien à une femme. Elle n'en avait pas la modestie nécessaire ; elle affectait de paraître homme en toutes ses actions. Elle riait démesurément quand quelque chose la touchait ; et particulièrement à la Comédie italienne, lorsque par hazard les bouffonneries en étaient bonnes. Elle éclatait de même en louanges et en soupirs, comme je l'ai déjà dit, quand les sérieuses lui plaisaient. Elle chantait souvent en compagnie, elle rêvait, et sa rêverie allait jusqu'à l'assoupissement. Elle paraissait brusque, inégale, et libertine en toutes ses paroles, tant sur la religion que sur les choses à quoi la bienséance de son sexe l'obligeait d'être retenue. Elle jurait le nom de Dieu : elle ne pouvait demeurer longtemps dans la même place ; en présence du Roi, de la Reine, et de toute la cour, elle appuyait les jambes sur des sièges aussi hauts que celui où elle était assise."—*Vide Mémoires de Madame de Motteville.*

* Pope.

peigne, she returned to Paris, where she remained till the beginning of November, and then set out for Rome. Her departure formed a curious contrast with her reception : she travelled in a hired carriage with a few attendants, and her expenses through France were defrayed by the king.* It is said that she was suspected of a wish to captivate Louis, with a view of marrying him ; a design so preposterous, that we cannot believe that she entertained it for a moment. But the suspicion was enough to make the queen-regent and the cardinal hasten her departure.

Christina returned to Rome ; but the remembrance of France, and the gaieties and festivities which had distinguished her reception there, the honours which had been paid to her, and the curiosity and admiration she had excited, had apparently left a strong impression on her fancy. Within a few months she found some pretext for repeating her visit, and reached Fontainebleau on the 15th of October, 1657 ; no longer conducted by the Duc de Guise, nor welcomed with royal pomp, nor followed by admiring or wondering crowds of the noble, the learned, or the gay, but in “an old worn-out vehicle, an old yellow petticoat, an old red jacket, and a dirty hood.”† She was accompanied by the Chevalier Santinelli, who bore the title of Captain of her guards ; and the Marquis Monaldeschi, her *Grand Ecuyer* or chamberlain. She was lodged in the Palace of Fontainebleau ; and here, about a fortnight after her arrival, she enacted that horrible tragedy, which, upon consideration of all the circumstances, seems to afford additional proof that this extraordinary woman was really disordered in her intellect.

It appears that she had reason to suspect Monaldeschi of having betrayed her interests, or at least her secrets ; but her reasons for doubting him, and the nature of the trust reposed in him, have never been explained. Having satisfied herself of the

* “De là cette Amazone suédoise prit des carosses de louage que le Roi lui fit donner, et de l'argent pour les pouvoir payer ; elle s'en alla, suivie seulement de sa chétive troupe ; sans train, sans grandeur, sans lit, sans vaisselle d'argent, ni aucune marque royale.”—(If this lady of the bedchamber had lived in our days she would have seen the descendant of Louis XIV. travel with less state.)

† Mémoires de Mademoiselle de Montpensier.

justice of her suspicions, she resolved to put him to death, and executed her resolve with the most deliberate barbarity.

On the 6th of November she sent for Père le Bel, the prior of a neighbouring convent, and placed in his hand a sealed packet of papers. They were standing together in an apartment called the Galleries des Cerfs, and she desired him to note the day, the hour, and the place in which she had given him these papers. Four days after the monk was again sent for, and in the same gallery found the queen, with Monaldeschi, Santinelli, and two others. She desired Père le Bel to produce the packet she had formerly given him, and, unfolding the letters, turned to Monaldeschi and asked him whether he knew them. The letters were copies, and he denied them, but with a faltering voice ; she immediately produced the originals in his own handwriting, and held them up before him. The unfortunate man, who read his fate in her countenance, fell on his knees and entreated mercy ; at the same moment Santinelli and the others drew their swords. Monaldeschi hung upon her dress, and shedding a flood of tears endeavoured to move her to compassion. The queen, without reply, turned quietly to the monk : " Father," said she, " bear witness that I give this man time and opportunity to justify himself, if possible." She then listened calmly to Monaldeschi for about an hour and a quarter ; but neither his excuses nor his supplications for mercy appeared to make the slightest impression upon her. She desired Père le Bel to confess and absolve the unhappy culprit, and turned away : * the monk ventured to implore her compassion, urging her by every motive of humanity, religion, and even policy, to change her fatal resolve ; he represented that the French king would never forgive an act of such cruelty committed within the precincts of his own palace. The queen listened with the same cool self-possession, but remained

* Some contemporary writers add a circumstance of peculiar and almost incredible atrocity. Monaldeschi, who could not be persuaded that the queen was really in earnest, refused to confess himself, and persisted in entreating mercy. Christina, it is said, ridiculed his cowardice. " Give him a stab," said she, with a cool ferocity which makes the blood curdle, " that he may know I am in earnest, and be obliged to confess himself at once : " and it appears that Monaldeschi received two wounds before he would make his confession.

inflexible, and retired to an adjoining room while the three executioners, or rather assassins, fell upon Monaldeschi, and put him to death by repeated wounds. He wore a cuirass under his dress, and defended himself with the strength of despair, so that his death was not immediate; and the queen remained coolly listening to the fatal struggle, and to his cries and supplications for mercy, till all was over: she then desired the body to be interred in the convent of Père le Bel, to whom she gave two hundred francs to pray for the soul of Monaldeschi.

This terrible act of private vengeance, this violation of all law, all justice, all human pity, excited the utmost astonishment and horror. Christina, insisting on her *divine rights*, and her exemption as a queen from all responsibility and all human control, did not even condescend to justify what she had done. The king merely requested that she would not for the present leave Fontainebleau to proceed to Paris, but he did not order her to quit his kingdom, nor did he make any public complaint of her conduct. After remaining at Fontainebleau for about two months in a species of exile, she was at length invited to Paris to celebrate the Carnival, and again lodged in the Louvre. But the mania with which she had formerly inspired the Parisians was at an end; they criticised and ridiculed her dress and manners, and the murder of Monaldeschi was neither forgotten nor pardoned. After a stay at Paris of about six weeks, she was obliged to understand the various hints which were given for her speedy departure, and returned to Rome.

She was received on her return to the papal court with a great display of external respect; and as she suffered continual embarrassment from the want of money and her careless habits, the Pope at length granted her a yearly allowance of 12,000 crowns, and appointed the Cardinal Azzolini to be the comptroller of her household. While Azzolini was in fact a kind of spy on all her proceedings, he contrived to insinuate himself completely into her confidence. He had a very pleasing person, bland and polished manners, a lively wit, and sufficient learning to be able to appear much more learned than he really was. These qualities imposed on Christina: * although he was false

* This is the less surprising when we find that Azzolini completely captivated Algernon Sydney, who speaks of him with the highest esteem

superficial, interested, and avaricious, he obtained an influence over her mind which he knew how to improve to his own advantage, and which ended only with her life.

Cardinal Azzolini managed her affairs with prudence and economy, and she was thenceforth spared a repetition of those vexatious and degrading expedients which had so frequently lowered her in the eyes of the Italians. Notwithstanding the philosophical contempt she sometimes affected for all outward state, she entertained at Rome a numerous and royal train : she was sometimes reduced to the necessity of pledging her jewels, plate, medals, &c., for the support of her household, merely because on public occasions she could not bear to be eclipsed in splendour by the Italian nobles, whom she affected to despise.

Although Christina accepted of the pension granted by the Pope, and had some reason to be grateful for such a seasonable mark of his beneficence, they were not therefore better friends. Alexander was weak, artificial, trifling ;* Christina was careless, petulant, and haughty : continual subjects of discontent arose between them, which it required all the subtle and insinuating genius of Azzolini to set right. Her journey to France, and the number of French and Spaniards entertained in her suite, had excited the jealousy of the papal court, and she was continually watched, and contradicted about trifles. On one occasion she required permission for two Frenchmen of rank to view the Castle of St. Angelo, which was refused. Christina sent back the messenger with this reply : "Tell the Holy Father that I am not less the daughter of the Great Gustavus !" There was indeed a time when the very sound of that mighty name had shaken to its foundation the spiritual and temporal power of the Roman Pontiff, and made his tiara tremble on his palsied head : that time was past ; and Alexander only smiled at the im-

and admiration, and as one "who had the reputation of having as good a head as any in Italy."—*Sydney Papers*, vol. ii.

* He was the same man who, when only Cardinal Chigi, had boasted to De Retz that "for two years he had always written with the same pen ;" from which idle remark the acute De Retz at once penetrated the shallow frivolity of a mind which would thus attach importance to such trifles.

tent sarcasm from one whom he held in dependence upon his bounty. Christina had negotiated a marriage between her Major-domo, Santinelli (the same who had stabbed Monaldeschi), and the Duchess de Ceri, a noble and beautiful Roman heiress. The Pope intimated his disapproval—Christina persisted: the Pope, interfering in a summary manner, shut the young duchess up in a convent, and ordered Santinelli to leave Rome. The queen then dismissed all the Italians from her train, quitted the Palazzo Mazarin, and took up her lodgings in a convent. Here she found herself under the continual *espionage* of the ecclesiastics. She fretted with inward impatience, but she was in a situation where remonstrance was useless, complaint degrading, and resistance dangerous. It was necessary to study a new and bitter lesson; to be quiet, and to submit. In the midst of these contentions she maintained a certain appearance of respect and decorum, mingled several times in the public processions, and begged and received the benediction of his Holiness. As if instigated by the spirit of contradiction, she took some pains at this time to conciliate the good-will of the Romans: she was liberal, magnificent, and courteous in all her actions, and defeated the attempts to intimidate or to irritate her by the most resolute self-control.

It must be remarked, as a part of Christina's character, or rather of that inconsistency which bordered on disease, that with her no mode of conduct, no tastes, or inclinations, or aims, or pursuits, were permanent. Her love of literature and art, for which, it is said, she sacrificed her throne, had the appearance of a caprice taken up from time to time; and for a long period together she would devote herself to the most trifling amusements,—to the dreams of alchemy, or astrology, or to political intrigues.

In 1660, her cousin, Charles Gustavus, died in the midst of all his ambitious and warlike plans; he left an infant son, who was immediately proclaimed King of Sweden, by the title of Charles XI. Christina immediately determined to revisit Sweden. The ostensible purpose of this journey was to arrange her affairs, and procure the more punctual payment of her revenue. There can be no doubt that her real object was to take advantage of any opportunity that might offer for the

resumption of her crown. She did not perhaps entertain any design of supplanting the infant king, either by treachery or violence; but his health was feeble, his life precarious, and, notwithstanding her absolute renunciation of the kingdom, she pretended to the right of succession, and did not disguise her inclination to claim that right. Having placed all her property and all her domestic affairs in the hands of Cardinal Azzolini, she dismissed the greatest part of her household, and left Rome with a very small train. She proceeded through Germany to Hamburg, where she remained only a few days, and was visited by Algernon Sydney.* She resumed her journey towards Stockholm, travelling with great rapidity, for she was apprehensive that some means would be taken to prevent her entrance into her former kingdom. In fact, nothing could exceed the astonishment, jealousy, and fear which her expected arrival caused, not only among the members of the regency, but among all ranks of the people. She was received upon the frontiers with all external marks of respect, but from the moment she set her foot within the kingdom her every step was watched, and her every action misinterpreted. She was obliged to dismiss all her train of foreigners, to send her confessor and almoner back to Hamburg, and to hear mass in the chapel of the French ambassador. Her change of religion and her general extravagance and levity of conduct had scandalized the whole nation, particularly the clergy and peasantry. The senate, and those in whom the chief power was now vested,

* Sydney thus mentions her in one of his letters to his father, Lord Leicester: "I left the Queen Christina at Hamburg, with a design of going into Sweden." . . . "She is thought to have great designs, of which every one judges according to their humour. Some think she will pretend to the crown; others, that she will be contented with the regency; and there doth not want those that say that she is employed from Rome to sow dissensions in Sweden. I have conversed a great deal with her, and do not believe a word of all this." He adds: "The French ambassador hath writ to Stockholm concerning her reception, which precaution was very necessary; for, though all the principal persons of the senate owe their fortunes to her, no man can undertake that, if she should go thither without some engagement for her security, she may not pass the rest of her life in some castle in Sweden, instead of her palace at Rome."—*Sydney Papers*.

dreaded her talents, and jealously guarded against her interference. Her memorial, requiring the payment of the arrears of her income, was strongly opposed under pretence that by her change of religion she had forfeited all claims whatever on the faith of the nation. In that very city, once her own capital, where she had reigned almost absolute, she was obliged to sue for justice,* and to receive, at length, as a special favour, the fulfilment of a solemn contract. Before she could procure even thus much, the Swedish Government, in the name of the young king, extorted from her a second formal renunciation of the kingdom, and of all pretensions, present or future, to the crown of Sweden; and, as her presence was found to be inconvenient and disagreeable, they required, as another condition, that she should either renounce the Roman Catholic religion or leave the kingdom, in either case securing to her the punctual payment of her income. There was no alternative: she submitted, and quitted Sweden after a residence of seven months.

Christina was never at any period remarkable for feeling, but she had boundless pride. At this time she was surrounded by the officers of the Swedish Government, by courtiers and spies; she had no friend on earth,—no one near her to whom she could have expressed what she felt. Yet we require no written testimony to conceive what she must have endured at this period—what swelling of the heart—what bitterness of repentance—what concentrated mortification! She returned to Hamburg, where she passed a whole year. She there took into her service a famous alchemist of the time, and expended large sums in the pursuit of the philosopher's stone. In the magnificent delusions of that science she for a while consoled herself for the deep disappointment and mortification she had lately suffered.

* The extraordinary inconsistency of Christina's character renders anything credible, else we could scarce believe the assertion of one writer (Parival), who says: "*La Reine, voyant que son autorité était sans pouvoir, eut recours aux larmes, priant à mains jointes les Ecclésiastiques de lui vouloir accorder son droit.*" Christina in tears! and wringing her hands!—The very evening before, when the deputies were representing the artifices of the Pope, she replied, with her usual haughty carelessness, "that the Pope would not give a doit for them all."

On her return to Rome in 1662, she was for some time involved in all the disputes between Louis XIV. and the court of Rome. She enjoyed the private satisfaction of seeing the Pope humbled ; but, disgusted and wearied by these petty vexations, she again turned her eyes towards Sweden, and, as usual, excited by opposition, she endeavoured to negotiate her return, and permission to reside there as a private individual. In 1666 she again left Rome, and proceeded to Hamburg. Thence she despatched a long memorial to the Swedish Diet, containing a variety of complaints and allegations. It was during this visit to Hamburg that she was invited to see a very complete and magnificent collection of medals : the proprietor pointed out the very medal which she had caused to be struck to celebrate her abdication. It represented on one side a fine profile of the queen, and on the reverse a crown, with the words *et sine te*, intimating, with short-sighted vain-glory, that she could go without it. She immediately flung it from her with an expression of indignation and disgust, and turned away.

During the few weeks she spent at Hamburg, while her emissaries were managing her affairs in Sweden, she lived with great magnificence. She gave a grand banquet to the principal inhabitants of the city. It was followed by the representation of a kind of lyrical ballet, founded on the story of the "Jerusalem Delivered," in which she played the part of Armida.

She soon afterwards proceeded on her journey to Sweden. The regency and the senate did not think it advisable to *forbid* the entrance of the daughter of Gustavus into her former capital ; but they were resolved to prevent it if possible. They sent her a list of the conditions on which she would be permitted to visit Stockholm. They were absolutely insulting, since they contained an implied accusation, or at least suspicion, of treason, as well as the absolute prohibition to exercise any rite of her religion while in the country. Before she had time to deliberate on this stroke of diplomacy, they followed it up by a decree, forbidding her to approach the court of the young king, or to take up her residence in any part of the Swedish dominions except Pomerania. They published a defence of these harsh measures, in which they alluded to the

murder of Monaldeschi as a proof of the alteration of her character and principles of government since she had quitted her own country : they accused her of openly asserting pretensions to the crown in case of the death of the young king ; they insisted upon the general horror which her change of religion had occasioned, and their fear lest she should have been corrupted by the artifices and policy of the Italian ecclesiastics ; they affected to regard her as a tool in the hands of the Pope (this was the unkindest cut of all) ; they remarked that it had ever been the vice of the family of Vasa to grow cruel and tyrannical as they grew old ; and that the degree of independence she had asserted was not compatible with the honour of the king or the safety of the kingdom. She was by this time advanced as far as Norköping, once a favourite palace and residence of her own. Here she was met by the decree of the senate : she immediately turned her back, refused to receive any farther civility from the king or his officers, spent the whole night in arranging her departure, and travelled with such celerity that in ten days she was again at Hamburg.*

While thus engaged she received intelligence of the death of her patron and tormentor Pope Alexander VII., and of the election of her friend Cardinal Rospigliosi, who, on ascending the papal chair, had taken the name of Clement IX. She celebrated this event by giving a grand fête ; but forgetting or not deigning to remember that she was in a Protestant city, she illuminated the front of her palace, and exhibited an allegorical transparency, representing the adoration of the Eucharist, and the Roman Church trampling heresy under her feet. When the meaning of this was explained to the gaping townspeople, already half drunk with the wine which by the queen's orders had been freely dispensed, they were seized with indignation ; they destroyed her transparency, broke her lamps and her windows, and had nearly pulled down her palace about her ears. The queen herself escaped with some difficulty ; she took the whole matter with much good-humour, and understanding that many persons were hurt and wounded in the

* Among those who were most active in mortifying the queen was her former favourite, the Count Magnus de la Gardie, who boasted that he had made Christina tremble with fear.

affray, she sent two thousand crowns to be distributed among the sufferers.

She had reason to rejoice at the accession of Rospigliosi ; for just at this time nothing could have been more seasonable or more agreeable. She had recently embarked in a new and important intrigue, in which she required and received all the aid which the Roman Government could bestow either in money or influence. The elective throne of Poland having become vacant this year (1667), we find Christina, after having flung away the crown her father had bequeathed to her, the most eager of the competitors for a crown which she had almost trampled upon. The absurdity, inconsistency, and utter hopelessness of this project were apparent then, and may well astonish us now ; but the surprising genius, the sagacity, and the learning of this unaccountable woman are not less apparent in the artful and powerfully written letters and instructions which she drew up herself for the ministers she employed.

This secret negotiation was still pending when she returned to Rome in November 1668 : the few months which immediately succeeded might, perhaps, be accounted among the least unhappy which Christina had passed since her abdication. She was occupied by an important state intrigue, which called forth all her talents and activity of mind. Sanguine as she was restless, she indulged in visions of future power, and already fancied herself leading a Polish army against the Turks, and regulating the affairs of Europe : while the reigning pontiff, a man of a gay, benign temper, and magnificent spirit, animated Rome by his brilliant court, and nothing was thought of but amusements, sacred or profane ; an opera or a ballet one day, a religious procession the next. Christina hired a palazetto on the Corso, to enjoy these public spectacles ; but her pleasures were embittered by one trifling circumstance. The Princess Colonna* had presumed to erect a balcony exactly opposite to that of the queen, where she sat pre-eminent in beauty and blazing with jewels, and Christina could not

* Marie Mancini, one of the four nieces of Cardinal Mazarin, and celebrated for having been the first love of Louis XIV. She was almost as mad, and quite as haughty, as Christina herself.

prevail on the courteous Pope to have it pulled down. The Princess Colonna was, without the title, queen in Rome ; Christina was only the queen at Rome : she was sometimes made to feel the distinction.

Clement IX. died in 1669, to the great regret of the Romans. Christina, whose Polish negotiations were now at an end, engaged in a new intrigue to raise her friend Cardinal Conti to the papal chair ;* but in this she failed : the election fell on Cardinal Altieri, who took the name of Clement X. He was an old man of eighty, in whom every passion was extinguished except avarice : he took very little interest either in Christina or in any of her concerns. Left to herself, she resumed her literary pursuits with extreme ardour, and spent immense sums in the purchase of pictures, medals, antiques, manuscripts, and other curiosities. The celebrated Academy of the Arcadia took its first rise from the literary men who were accustomed to meet at her palace, and who formed her habitual circle. Among these may be mentioned three, who did real honour to her patronage : Filicaja and Guidi, two of the most celebrated lyric poets of Italy, and Cassini the astronomer. It has excited surprise that Filicaja should have prostituted his sublime genius to sing the praises of Christina ; but the incense laid upon an unworthy altar, the sacrifice offered up to a false divinity, is sometimes hallowed by the sincerity or the gratitude of the worshipper. Christina had loaded Filicaja with benefits, had protected him when poor, and had educated his two sons at her expense. In return, he has placed upon her brow a glorious wreath of poetical praise. She was proud to wear it while living, and, being dead, it may be allowed to hang unmolested upon her tomb. No one attempted to remove the garland of flowers which a grateful freedman flung upon the grave of Nero ;—but he was not therefore less a monster.

During the next few years, Christina appears to have passed her time chiefly in study, in collecting works of art, in making experiments in chemistry, in corresponding with most of the

* The brother of Conti, the Duke di Poli, was at this time her Master of Horse ; and the Duchess Muti, his sister, her principal Lady-in-waiting.

eminent scholars and learned societies of Europe, and intermeddling now and then with the political intrigues of France, Spain, and Germany. Her revenues were more punctually paid, and she maintained at Rome a retinue of about four hundred persons, one year with another. Clement X. died in 1676; her intrigues in favour of Cardinal Conti were again unsuccessful, and the choice of the conclave fell on Cardinal Odescalchi (Pope Innocent XI.), an old man, whose plain, firm good sense, and simplicity of character, were not to be dazzled by Christina's accomplishments, nor discomposed by her eccentricities. During his pontificate she became involved in some disputes with the papal court, which will farther illustrate her character.

It appears that certain privileges and immunities had long been extended to the retinues of the foreign ambassadors at Rome, and these, instead of being confined to their own families and residences, at length extended to the immediate neighbourhood, so that there were, in fact, two-thirds of the city in which it was contrary to etiquette to arrest a criminal. The various abuses to which this state of things naturally led became at length intolerable. The Pope would no longer allow his jurisdiction to be circumscribed, and the laws defied under his eyes, and in his own capital. The King of Spain and the Emperor yielded to his remonstrances. The King of France, after a long resistance, and many disputes, at length gave way. Christina, in a very sensible letter to the Pope, resigned her privileges to a certain extent; her residence, and the persons of her suite, being, of course, considered as sacred and inviolable. But the affair did not end here. A man, convicted of some offence, was seized by the sbirris: as they were driving him with blows through the streets he escaped, and ran to take shelter in a stable attached to the palace of the queen. It was locked; but he seized upon the staple, or chain, of the door with such force, that no efforts of the sbirri could tear him away: they put a cord round his neck, and still, with the courage or the obstinacy of despair, he kept his hold, though on the brink of strangulation. Christina was at this moment in her chapel, and a multitude had gathered round her palace: the noise of the affray, the shouts, cries, and imprecations of the populace, reached her. She no sooner learned the cause, than

she ordered Landini, the captain of her guards, and another of her attendants, to rescue the man, and to cut down the officers of justice if they resisted: the cowardly sbirri fell on their knees, and at once resigned their prisoner, who was carried off amid shouts of "Vive la Regina!" and placed in safety. The queen loudly complained of the insult offered to her dignity, in attempting to arrest a man within the precincts of her palace. The Pope as loudly insisted on the insult offered to his authority; and his treasurer demanded that Landini and his companion should be immediately delivered up to justice. The queen replied to the treasurer in these words under her own hand*:—

"To dishonour yourself and your master is then termed justice in your tribunal? I pity and despise you, now; but shall pity you much more when you become cardinal. Take my word that those whom you have condemned to death shall live, if it please God, some time longer; and if they should die by any other hand than HIS, they shall not fall alone.

"CHRISTINA ALESSANDRA.

"From my palace, this 24th July, 1687."

Meantime she armed her suite, protected her attendants (who, in fact, had only acted by her orders), and openly braved the Pope; being in everything supported and abetted by the French ambassador, with whom she now made common cause against the papal government. The Cardinal Albani endeavoured in vain to bring the royal Amazon to reason: he reminded her that he whom she thus defied was the Pope. "And what if he be a pope?" replied Christina; "I will make him know that I am a queen." The straightforward old Pope, without being in the slightest degree discomposed by her violence and imperial airs, maintained an imperturbable *sang froid*. One very warm day that she had paraded the streets with her armed servants, including the two who had been denounced, the Pope sent her a present of some exquisite fruit from his garden on the Monte Cavallo, accompanied by

* This letter has become celebrated for its energetic brevity: the original is in Italian.

a polite message. She thanked him, but added, "Do not let the Pope imagine that he can lull me to sleep with his feigned courtesies!" When this was repeated to the Pope, he merely shrugged up his shoulders, and observed, "*È donna!*"—" 'Tis a woman!" Considering to whom he applied the expression, he could not have used a more insulting term of contempt. Christina, accordingly, was furious; she compared herself to Cæsar among the pirates. The Pope, driven to harsh measures, and determined to carry his point, excommunicated the French ambassador (Lavardin), and withdrew the pension of 12,000 ducats which Christina had hitherto enjoyed. "Tell him," said she, in answer to this notification, "that I have accepted his benefits as a penance inflicted on me by the hand of God, and I thank him for having removed from me such a subject of shame and humiliation."

This contention with the Pope served to amuse and excite her during the remainder of her life.* She was now about sixty, and her health began to decline. She told Burnet, in 1687, that she considered herself as "one of the *antiquities* of Rome," and by all others she was certainly regarded as one of its greatest curiosities. A traveller, who was introduced to her at this period, has left us a very graphic description of her person and dress. She had discarded the doublet, "*couleur de flamme*," the black wig, "*bien poudrée*," and the laced cravat with its knot of scarlet ribbons; and her attire, though scarcely more becoming to her sex, was rather more suitable to her age. She was usually habited in a coat or vest of black satin, reaching almost to the knees, and buttoned down the front; under this a very short petticoat. Her own light brown hair, once so beautiful and luxuriant, was cut short and combed up so as to stand on end, without covering or ornament. She was very short, fat, and round; her voice, her features, and her complexion were completely masculine, and had ceased to be in any respect agreeable. Her eyes, however, retained their brilliance, and "her tongue bewitched as oddly as her eyes." Her manners, whenever she chose, were winning. She kept up

* After her death the Pope carried his point, and the abuses of which he complained were entirely abolished.

a splendid court, received strangers affably, and conversed with the utmost freedom.*

She corresponded at this time with Madame Dacier and Mademoiselle de Scuderi, whom she deigned, with one or two others, to exempt from the general scorn with which she regarded her own sex. Her last letter to Mademoiselle de Scuderi contains the following very characteristic passage:—"You must know that since you saw me some years ago I am not grown handsomer: far from it; and, to confess the truth, I am still, in spite of flattery, as ill satisfied with my own person as ever I was. I envy not those who possess fortune, dominions, treasures; but I would fain raise myself above all mortals by wisdom and virtue; and that is what makes me discontented. *Au reste*—I am in good health, which will last as long as it pleases God. I have naturally an extreme aversion to grow old, and I hardly know how I shall get used to the idea. If I had had my choice between old age and death, I think I should have chosen the latter without hesitation. But since we are not consulted on this point, I shall resign myself to live on with as much pleasure as I can. Death, which I see approaching step by step, does not alarm me. I await it without a wish and without a fear."

Wearied at length by her paltry disputes with the Pope, Christina was meditating a retreat from Rome, and had some hopes of erecting for herself an independent principality in Germany. She had already entered into some negotiations on this subject, when all her projects and all her vexations were terminated by death, and her restless spirit found repose in the tomb.

She was seized with a malignant fever, of which she died on the 19th of April, 1689, having just completed her sixty-third year. Her constitution was naturally so strong, that she appears to have had a hard struggle with death, and twice recovered after being given over, and twice relapsed before she finally sank under the influence of her disease. In

* She said to Burnet when he visited her, "Providence had need have a special care of this Holy See of ours; since I have lived here, I have seen four popes, and" (with an oath) "all fools and blockheads!"

her last moments she sent Albani (afterwards Clement XI.) to solicit the pardon of the Pope for all her offences against him, and the good-natured old man sent her a plenary absolution for all her sins. Cardinal Azzolini, who retained his influence to the last, drew up a will, in which he was himself declared sole heir to all her property, with the exception of a few legacies to her household. Christina signed this paper when almost in a state of insensibility, and soon afterwards expired.

She was interred with the utmost pomp in the Church of St. Peter, the Pope himself officiating, and all the cardinals and the principal nobility of Rome assisting at the ceremony. By her will Christina had ordered that the only epitaph on her tomb should be these words:—"Vixit Christina anni lxiii.;" "Christina lived sixty-three years;" but, if I remember rightly, the cenotaph in St. Peter's, erected to her memory by Cardinal Albani, exhibits, besides these words, a long Latin inscription.

Cardinal Azzolini derived no advantage from his rich inheritance; before even the preliminary forms were settled which enabled him to take possession of the property, he died at Rome, within three months after the death of Christina. It is said that Azzolini was her lover: the same has been asserted of Monaldeschi and others. On this point it may be observed once for all, that Christina has left behind her a reputation for chastity rather worse than problematical; but in the testimony brought against her there is so much that is evidently false, so much that is improbable, so much that is unsupported by proof of any kind, that it would be very easy to defend her plausibly, if it were worth while,—but it is not. When Christina threw aside all the decorum of her sex in her language and deportment, she cast away the surest safeguard of her reputation as a woman, and ceasing to be respectable, she ceased to be interesting. It was in vain afterwards, that she called on the French Government to punish the satirists who had libelled her in prose and verse; in vain that she has left behind her in her Memoirs a solemn appeal to her Maker, in which she expresses her gratitude that though so often "on the edge of the precipice, she had

never fallen." She had too often "touched the brink of all we hate," to be believed on her own words, or absolved by any testimony whatever: no one has ever given much credit to her professions, or thought the question of her guilt or innocence a matter of importance. People were content to take her for that which she was content to appear. Whether Monaldeschi owed his death to the jealousy of an impassioned woman, or the anger of an offended queen, remains still a mystery, but I should suppose the latter. It may be doubted whether Christina ever loved, or was loved, in the whole course of her life.

The property which Christina left at her death was estimated at about 500,000*l.* of our money. Her cabinet of medals* and antiques, which was the finest in the world, was purchased by the Odescalchi family: her magnificent collection of books and MSS. was purchased by Alexander VIII., and now forms part of the Library of the Vatican. It appears that while in Italy, she cultivated a real taste for art: her gallery contained some of the most splendid works of the Italian masters. The greatest part of these were purchased by the Régent Duke of Orleans, and on the dispersion of his gallery after the Revolution, found their way to England.†

Her passion for medals was a kind of mania; she entertained the design of giving the history of her life in a series of medals, and about one hundred were engraved at different times: the subjects and inscriptions were generally her own invention, and stamped with her peculiar character. The last of these medals, struck in 1689, bears the head of the queen on one side, and on the reverse a bird of Paradise, soaring far above the land, the sea, and the clouds, with the

* The cabinet of medals which had belonged to Charles I., and some of his finest pictures, were in the possession of Christina.

† For the pictures which hung in her presence chamber, the Pope offered her, during her life, sixty thousand Roman crowns, which she refused. Looking over the catalogue of her pictures, we find that Correggio's "*Venus teaching Cupid to read*," now in the National Gallery, Raffaello's *St. John*, in the Grosvenor Gallery, and several pictures in the Stafford Gallery, once belonged to Christina.

inscription in Italian, "Libero io nacqui, e vissi, e morro sciolto;" "I was born, have lived, and will die free."

Christina was a patroness of music, and extremely sensible to all the pleasure it can bestow. While she reigned in Sweden she had some of the best Italian musicians in her service, and during her residence at Rome the first theatre for the performances of operas was erected, partly under her auspices, in the year 1671. "The year 1680," says Dr. Burney, "is rendered memorable to musicians by the opera of *L'Onesta d'Amore*, as it was the first dramatic composition of the elegant, profound, and original composer Alessandro Scarlatti, who has so many titles to lasting fame. This early production of Scarlatti was performed in the palace of the Queen of Sweden." Scarlatti was indebted to the munificence and taste of Christina for his first success at Rome, and ever afterwards remembered her with gratitude. He was the precursor of Purcell and Handel, and the founder of the Neapolitan School of Music, which produced Pergolesi, Paesiello, and at last Cimarosa.

Christina left several literary works in manuscript, some of which are lost. The fragment of her own Memoirs, which she did not live to complete, begins with a solemn dedication to the Author of her being, "as having been, by His grace, the most favoured of all His creatures. She thanks Him for having made subservient to His glory and to her happiness the vigour of her mind, the possession of health, fortune, royal birth, greatness, and all that could result from an assemblage of noble and admirable qualities. To have made her absolute sovereign over the bravest and most glorious nation of the earth was assuredly the least of her obligations to Him, since, after having bestowed upon her all these blessings, He had called her to the glory of making the most perfect sacrifice of all her fortune, her greatness, and her splendour, for His sake, and greatly restoring what He had so graciously lent her. In the same spirit of vain-glorious self-complacency, she gives a list of her faults, which she confesses that she can dissemble, but never took sufficient pains to correct.*

* "J'étais méfiante, soupçonneuse, de plus ambitieuse jusqu'à l'excès. J'étais colère et emportée, superbe et impatiente, méprisante et railleuse."

But then she thanks Heaven that they have all, by especial providence, turned to the glory of her Creator, and her own advantage. This curious fragment does not extend beyond the first six or seven years of her life, and was written about the year 1681. It does not appear that it was ever completed.

There are also "Reflections on the Life and Character of Alexander the Great," published by Archenholtz; a vast collection of letters; and some maxims in the manner of Rochefoucauld, but far inferior.

Among the sayings of Christina, a few are worth remarking, either for their truth, or as characteristic of the woman.

"Fools," she was accustomed to say, "are more to be feared than the wicked."

"Whatever is false, is ridiculous."

"There is a species of pleasure in suffering from the ingratitude of others, which is reserved for great minds alone."

"We should never speak of ourselves either good or evil." This was a maxim which she was continually violating in her own person: she appears to have been the greatest egotist extant (for a female).

"To suffer for having acted well is itself a species of recompense."

"We read for instruction, for correction, and for consolation."

"There is a star above us, which unites souls of the first order, though worlds and ages separate them."

"Life becomes useless and insipid when we have no longer either friends or enemies."

"We grow old more through indolence than through age."

"The Salique law, which excludes women from the throne, is a just and a wise law."

"Cruelty is the result of baseness and of cowardice."

"To speak truth, and to do good, is to resemble in some sort the Deity we worship."

"This life is like an inn, in which the soul spends a few moments on its journey."

She confesses she had many other faults, which she passes over in silence—"parceque rien n'est parfait dans ce monde."

There are several anecdotes related of Christina, which I do not find under any particular date, and which may therefore be inserted here.

When Michael Dahl, a Swedish painter, who was afterwards in the service of William III., visited Rome, he was employed to paint a portrait of Christina. One day, while she was sitting to him, she asked him what he intended to put in her hand. "A fan, please your Majesty." "A fan!" exclaimed Christina, starting up, with a tremendous oath—"A fan!—A lion, man! a lion is fitter for the Queen of Sweden!"

Once, as she was looking with evident admiration at Bernini's statue of Truth, a cardinal *bel-esprit*, who was standing by, exclaimed, with an air of gallantry, "Heaven be praised that your Majesty so much admires truth, a thing which so few princes can even tolerate!" "No wonder," replied the queen instantly; "all truths are not of marble!" (*Je le crois bien—c'est que toutes les vérités ne sont pas de marbre.*)

A manuscript volume, containing an account of her conversion from Lutheranism to Popery, having been sent to her, she wrote a few words on the back of it, which have since passed into a proverb, and may well be applied to the principal actors on many other occasions:—"Chi lo sa, non scrive; chi lo scrive non sa;"—"the person who knows all about it, does not write; and the writer knows nothing of the matter."

One day that she was laughing and talking very loud during the celebration of the mass, the Pope, as a gentle hint, sent her his own rosary, and desired her to make use of it. "Non miga voglio essere un' Catolica da bacchettone!" exclaimed Christina; making use of a strong, but rather vulgar expression, which signifies that she had not become a Catholic to tell her beads.

One of Christina's characteristics was a passion for meddling in the affairs of others. She had correspondents in every court in Europe, and, to the end of her life, there was no event of any importance in which she did not take some part. She was fond of volunteering advice, which, from a sovereign at

the head of a powerful nation, was listened to at least with respect; but when she sank into an individual, her officious propensities, and her assumption of political importance, became ridiculous. Thus, before her abdication, she interfered between Louis XIV. and his nobles;* afterwards, between France and Spain, between Charles II. and Cromwell, between Poland and Sweden, &c. Christina was an example of what we often see in private life; but she seems to have possessed excellent judgment in everybody's affairs but her own. Though her advice was sometimes admirable, and her interference well meant, it was never serviceable to others; and, except in one instance, never very creditable to herself. Her letter to the Chevalier Terlon, relative to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and her advice to Louis XIV. against the persecution of the Protestants, remain extant, to claim the admiration of posterity, and to show how justly and how nobly this strange woman could sometimes both think and feel. She foretold the dethronement of James II. three years before it occurred, by that acute spirit of calculation on the motives and results of human actions which she used to call "*l'astrologie terrestre*;"† and the manner in which she judged the characters of Cromwell and Louis XIV. is another instance of her sagacity. She used to compare Cromwell to her ancestor, Gustavus Vasa, while she ridiculed the shallow pomposity of Louis, and this at a time when the stream of public opinion ran the contrary way in both cases. Yet the same woman was deceived and misled by the charlatan Bourdelot, and thought Azzolini a greater man than Oxenstiern.

* During the wars of the Fronde, her hero, the Prince de Condé, might have thanked her for his banishment, which was partly caused by her intermeddling on this occasion. (*Vide* Notes to Evelyn's Correspondence.)

† "*L'astrologie terrestre est meilleure que la céleste.*" "Sans être astrologue j'ai prédit tout ce qui est arrivé au Roi d'Angleterre et l'affaire de la persécution des Huguenots de France a été le coup fatal pour ce pauvre Prince, trop bigot et trop peu politique qui s'est perdu pour se laisser gouverner par la maudite race des Jésuites et des Moines, qui gâtent toujours toutes les choses dont ils se mêlent."—*Letter to Olivekrans.*

But to attempt to recount all her monstrous inconsistencies of conduct and character were a vain task : at one time, frank, even to audacity ; at another, dissembling from the meanest motives ; at one time magnanimous and benevolent ; at another, revengeful as a fury and cruel as a tigress ; now we behold her as one

“To whose daring spirit

To touch the stars had seemed an easy flight,”

and anon we see her crawling at the foot of that petty throne which her great father had nearly humbled to the dust ! Philosophy in her mouth, folly in her head, and pride in her heart, to what purpose were all her talents, her intellectual power, her acquired knowledge ? Unsustained by moral dignity, unenlightened by true religion, unwarmed by any generous principle or tender affection, her mind resembled a chaos, in which the elements of greatness and goodness were mixed up confusedly with every perverse ingredient that ever entered into the composition of man or woman.



A N N E,

QUEEN OF GREAT BRITAIN.



ANNE STUART, the second daughter of James, duke of York, younger brother of Charles II., was born at the palace of St. James's, on the 6th of February, 1664. Her mother was Anne Hyde, the daughter of the celebrated Lord Chancellor Clarendon. The marriage of the duke with Anne Hyde gave great offence at court, on account of her inferior birth; and the old queen-dowager, Henrietta Maria, vowed in a rage that when "that woman entered Whitehall at one door she would go out at the other:" yet she was afterwards reconciled to the duchess, and acknowledged her as her daughter. Anne Hyde possessed considerable talents and strength of character: without any pretensions to beauty, she had a very noble and commanding presence, and wore her dignity with much more grace than either of her daughters afterwards wore the crown they successively inherited.

The Lady Anne, as she was then called, had, as an infant, very delicate health, and at five years old was taken to France, in hopes that a milder air would restore her. Hence it appears that she was absent when her mother, after a lingering illness, died in 1671, having first declared herself a Roman Catholic, to the great grief of her father, Lord Clarendon. The education of the two young princesses, Mary and Anne, was entrusted to Protestants; and so great was the public jealousy excited by the religion of their father, that they were brought up with more than common strictness in the tenets of the Reformed

Faith. It is generally admitted that the duke never attempted to interfere with their education in this particular, though they resided constantly with him and his second wife, Maria of Modena, a very amiable woman, but, like her husband, a bigoted Roman Catholic. The whole family lived together as if there had been no differences in point of religion ; and the Duchess Maria treated her husband's children with extreme kindness.

The early years of the Princess Anne are chiefly remarkable for the commencement of a friendship which, as it coloured her future life, had no small influence on the destinies of Europe.

Two sisters, whose names were Frances and Sarah Jennings, were distinguished in the court for their beauty and accomplishments ; the eldest, Frances, had been maid-of-honour to the first Duchess of York ; she was thus the means of introducing to the notice of the second duchess her sister Sarah, who became, at twelve years old, the companion and playfellow of the young princesses. Anne, who was then about nine years of age, and of a very gentle and affectionate disposition, attached herself to Sarah Jennings, whose talent, high spirit, and vivacity completely captivated her. The inequality of their years, and the greater inequality in point of understanding, were supplied by the difference of rank ; and this friendship, begun in childish fondness, appears to have been heightened by the very contrast of character, into the most romantic devotion, at least on the part of Anne. Sarah Jennings was subsequently appointed maid-of-honour to the Duchess of York, thus continuing her residence under the same roof with the young Princess : even on the marriage of the former with Colonel Churchill in 1678 they do not appear to have been separated, for Churchill was attached to the service of the Duke of York, as gentleman of his bed-chamber ; and when the duke and his family were sent by Charles II. into a kind of exile to Scotland and to Holland, the Lady Anne accompanied her father, and the Churchills were generally in their suite.

When Anne was about seventeen, it was thought proper that she should be married, and the Electoral Prince of Hanover, afterwards George I., came over to pay his addresses to her.

He did not, however, succeed in his suit; and from the conduct of this prince to the wife he afterwards married, Anne had some reason to rejoice in her escape, although the union would have prevented many disputes relative to the succession. Her next suitor was George, prince of Denmark, brother to the king of that country, who was invited over in 1683. He is described as a fair, good-humoured, heavy-looking young man, who spoke bad French, loved good wine, and was rather awkward and bashful in his manners; he succeeded, however, in pleasing "the gentle Lady Anne," and they were married on the 28th of July, 1683. Both being endued with good dispositions and equal tempers, and neither of them very capable of discovering each other's deficiencies this marriage proved extremely happy, and they lived together in uninterrupted harmony.

The death of Charles II. in 1685, and the accession of her father to the throne, as James II., made little difference in the domestic arrangements of the Princess Anne, and none in her political position. She formed habitually one of her father's court; continued, apparently, on the best terms with her mother-in-law, the young queen; and resided quietly at Whitehall, where her usual amusements were court-gossip and card-playing; the society of her friend, Lady Churchill; and the duties of her nursery. She became the mother of two daughters, who died in their infancy. But, by the course of political events, Anne was soon called on to play a part much more important, and very unsuited both to her abilities and her inclinations.

James II. had not been many months on the throne before he began to entertain designs against the religion and liberty of the state, which alarmed all those who loved their country. Under the influence of the Roman Catholic priesthood, particularly of Father Petre, his confessor, he pursued these designs with a degree of obstinacy which appears like infatuation, and which disgusted and alienated his best friends. Anne, who was sincerely religious, was shocked by her father's conduct. She says, in one of her letters to her sister Mary, "Lord Sunderland stirs up the king to do things faster than I believe he would of himself. Things are come to that

pass now, that if they go on much longer I believe in a little while no Protestant will be able to live :” and she afterwards adds, in the same letter,—“ I am resolved to undergo anything rather than change my religion ; nay, if it should come to such extremities, I will choose to live on alms rather than change.”*

Anne was at this time in the hands of a party opposed to the court, who exaggerated these dangers, and, from motives not always the most pure or pious, worked up her passive temper to the degree of energy necessary for their own purposes.

Lady Churchill, a strong-minded, penetrating woman, saw that the measures pursued by King James were leading him to destruction ; and the boundless influence she possessed over the princess was employed in strengthening her in her opposition to her father. The consequences were, that when William, prince of Orange, landed in 1688, the prince of Denmark and Lord Churchill were among the first who joined him.† Anne remained at Whitehall, trembling for the event. When James returned towards London, she was so overpowered by the apprehension of his displeasure, that all presence of mind forsook her. She declared to Lady Churchill, that “ rather than meet the eyes of her injured father, she would jump out of the window.” The same night, through the management and presence of mind of Lady Churchill and the Countess of Dorset, she escaped in the Earl of Dorset’s carriage, and went down to the earl’s house at Nottingham, where she remained unmolested, and without taking any part in affairs, till the revolution was completed. Anne was her father’s favourite, and it was on hearing of her flight that he exclaimed, with tears, “ God help me ! my own children have forsaken me !”

* Dalrymple, Appendix, p. 299.

† The Prince of Denmark had been accustomed, when he heard of the defection of any of those who had been favoured by the king, to say, “ *Est-il possible ?*” The only remark James made upon the prince’s flight was, “ *Est-il possible gone too ?*” In King James’s memoirs it is said, “ He was more troubled at the unnaturalness of the action than the want of his service, for that the loss of a good trooper had been of greater consequence.”—*Clarendon’s Diary*, vol. ii. p. 208.

The conduct of Anne during this crisis has been defended by some writers, as being dictated by principle ; and excused by others, on the plea of expediency, or rather of necessity ; but we listen to these excuses without either sympathy or conviction. Her situation was a painful one, no doubt ; but seems to have caused her more fright and perplexity than grief or pain. There is a passage in the journal of her uncle, Lord Clarendon, which exhibits, in a striking manner, the cold passiveness with which Anne looked on while her father was hurrying to his destruction ; and the indolent temper and manner of the woman are placed before us in a few words : "I took the liberty," says Lord Clarendon, "to represent that it was a pity nobody would take this opportunity of speaking freely and honestly to the king ; that I humbly thought it very proper for her royal highness to say something to him, and to beg him to confer with some of his old friends, who had always served him faithfully. She answered, she never spoke to the king on business. I said her father could not but take it well, to see her royal highness so concerned for him ; to which she replied, he had no reason to doubt her concern. I said all I could to put her upon speaking to him, telling her it might possibly produce some good effect, and no ill come of it ; but she would not be prevailed upon. The more I pressed her, the more reserved she was ; and said she must dress herself, it was almost prayer-time."*

James had so strong a party, so many who disapproved of his measures were attached to his family, and the beauty and innocence of his young queen had rendered her so popular among the nobility, that had he remained in England, and abandoned his pernicious and illegal measures, all might yet have been well ; but, seized with a kind of panic, he quitted the country. The Parliament then declared the throne "vacant ;" and, after drawing up the celebrated act called the "*Bill of Rights*," by which the liberties of the people were better secured, and the royal prerogative very much diminished, they obliged the Prince of Orange to sign it, and raised him and his consort, the eldest daughter of James II., to the throne,

* Clarendon's Diary, vol. ii. p. 191.

to reign jointly under the titles of William III. and Mary II. In case of their death without leaving posterity, it was settled that the Princess Anne should succeed them ; and in case Anne also died without heirs, then the Princess Sophia, the Electress of Hanover, who was the daughter of Elizabeth of Bohemia, the sister of Charles I., was to succeed to the English crown, being, with all her family, of the Protestant religion. This change of the government and of the usual order of succession is called in English history "THE REVOLUTION ;" and as it is used as an epoch, and it is common to hear that such an event happened before or after the Revolution, it is worth while to remember that it took place in 1688, exactly one hundred years before the first French Revolution of 1789.

By these extraordinary events Anne became a person of great importance in the state, and her consequence was increased by the birth of a son in July 1689, who was regarded as the presumptive heir to the crown, and immediately created Duke of Gloucester.

The two sisters, Queen Mary and the Princess Anne, had hitherto lived on good terms, but soon after the Revolution they began to quarrel in a manner that was equally unsisterly and uncourtly. Anne was dissatisfied with the revenue allowed her, while Mary and William thought her demands of 70,000*l.* a year too unreasonable ; they even threatened to curtail her allowance of 30,000*l.* a year which she had received from her father. Anne was incensed : she was not naturally violent, but she had her friend Lady Churchill (now the Countess of Marlborough) ever at her side, to supply all that was wanting in warmth and determination of purpose : this violent and haughty woman fomented the disputes between the sisters. The king and queen were obliged to make a compromise, and allow the Princess 50,000*l.* a year. Some disgraceful scenes of altercation took place, and as Lord and Lady Marlborough were known to be the enthusiastic partisans, and probably the advisers of Anne, they fell under the heaviest displeasure of the court. The Earl of Marlborough was deprived of all his offices, and the queen wrote a very severe and peremptory letter to her sister, commanding her to dismiss the countess from her

service. The Lord Chamberlain at the same time sent Lady Marlborough the royal order to remove from Whitehall. This was too much to bear ; Anne immediately left Whitehall herself, and took up her residence at Berkeley House.

The resentment which Anne felt at this treatment of her friend and favourite very naturally added to the excess of her attachment. They had long lived upon such equal and confidential terms, that the restraints of rank and custom were laid aside ; the princess had assumed the name of Mrs. Morley, while Lady Marlborough chose the name of Mrs. Freeman, being suitable, as she observed, to the frankness of her disposition ; and under these feigned names they were accustomed to address each other in their letters and conversation. On the present occasion, Lady Marlborough offered to withdraw from the service of the princess, rather than be the cause of these disputes ; she probably knew how this offer would be received before she made it. Anne overwhelmed her with tender expostulations, and, having occasion to send her a note, she added, "And now I have this opportunity of writing, my dear Mrs. Freeman must give me leave to tell her, if ever she should be so cruel to leave her faithful Mrs. Morley, she will rob her of the joy of her life ; for if that day should come, I should never enjoy another happy minute ; and I swear to you I would shut myself up, and never see a creature." In another letter she says, "Let them do what they please, nothing shall ever vex me, so I can have the satisfaction of seeing my dear Mrs. Freeman ; and I swear I would live on bread and water, between four walls, with her, without repining ; for as long as you continue kind, nothing can ever be a real mortification to your faithful Mrs. Morley, who wishes she may never enjoy a moment's happiness in this world or the next, if ever she proves false to you." These protestations are not well expressed, but they came warm from the heart of the writer, and were sincere at the moment ; the changes which afterwards took place make them curious and interesting. The phrase "as long as you are kind," which often occurs in Anne's notes and letters to her friend, shows that the petulant and fiery character of the favourite not having yet led her to presume too far, had only served to increase her influence, and to excite and interest

the colder temper of Anne ; but in the long run, gentleness alone can claim enduring power, as we shall see.

The death of Queen Mary, in December 1694, made a change in Anne's position : though the sisters had never been reconciled, the tenderness of Anne was excited by the queen's danger, and she sent an affectionate entreaty to be admitted to her chamber : this was refused ; but Mary sent her a forgiving message, and soon afterwards expired. She died at Kensington Palace, in her thirty-third year.

Mary had many good qualities. The consistent and undeviating propriety of her conduct towards a very unamiable and ungracious husband rendered her both estimable and interesting ; she loved him truly, and was the most submissive of wives to a man who owed his throne to her ; her sweetness stood between him and the national dislike, so that a part of his unpopularity fell upon her. Her conduct in ascending the throne of her father appears very unfilial, and procured her the title of " the second Tullia ;" perhaps, considering the circumstances, it was unavoidable ; but she showed so much unconcern and exultation in the first instance, that for a time every heart was turned against her. She excused herself by saying, that she had been commanded by the prince her husband " to put on a cheerfulness, and act a part not natural to her." Here dissimulation, as usual, defeated its own purpose, for her apparent want of feeling disgusted and scandalized all around her. It is said that she frequently sent assistance to the exiled king, who was then living at St. Germain's ; that she would not permit any one to allude to him with disrespect, and those who were most in her confidence believed, that had she survived her husband, she would have done her utmost to restore her father to his throne, but under proper restrictions. It is hardly possible to imagine a situation more painful than that of Mary, when her husband and her father were opposed to each other in Ireland in 1690 ; and the Battle of the Boyne, where both fought in person, would have almost distracted a woman of stronger feelings. In her letters and her conversation, Mary expressed the tenderest anxiety for the safety of her husband, and the utmost delight at his success : she never alluded to her father ; but it would be unjust to argue that, therefore, she did

not think of him and feel for him. On the whole, Queen Mary was much superior in talent and power of character to her sister Anne, though less amiable and popular, both as a queen and a woman.

On the death of her sister, the princess showed the native kindness of her disposition; for, laying aside all animosity, she immediately waited on the king, and expressed the share she took in his grief, and her willingness to do anything in her power to alleviate it. William received her with kindness, presented her with the greatest part of her sister's jewels, and assigned her the palace of St. James for her residence.

This reconciliation was not very sincere on either side, but appearances were preserved. Anne and Lady Marlborough contented themselves with abusing William in their own circle as a "Caliban," "a Dutch monster," &c.; and though these offensive and imprudent expressions were generally reported to the king by Lady Fitzharding, William calmly pursued his own plans, and treated this feminine vituperation with a magnanimous contempt: he even restored the Earl of Marlborough, whose gentleness and suavity formed the strongest contrast with the fiery and petulant temper of his wife, to some degree of favour. In the meantime the young Duke of Gloucester continued to improve in person and mind, and became the idol of the nation, as well as of his fond mother. When he was ten years old it was thought proper to take him out of the hands of his governess, Lady Fitzharding, and place him under the tuition of men. The king with some difficulty acceded to the earnest request of Anne, that Lord Marlborough might be appointed the governor of her darling son; his knowledge of the world, his integrity, and his courtly elegance of manner fitted him for this high charge, and his want of literature was not of much consequence. Bishop Burnet was selected as principal preceptor. Under these two celebrated men the young prince rapidly improved, and displayed a character and disposition manly beyond his years. The eyes of the people were turned on this boy, as on one destined to heal all differences, and prevent all national jealousies; they loved him not only for what he was then, but all that they hoped he would become to them and to their children; they had "entrusted

their futurity to him," and in the midst of these fond anticipations he was suddenly snatched from the world. He was seized with a fever in consequence of overheating himself with dancing on his birthday, which had been solemnized with the greatest splendour and festivity, and four days afterwards he expired at Windsor, on the 24th of July, 1700, being just eleven years old.

The grief of this loss sank deep in Anne's maternal heart ; he was the last of six children successively snatched from her, and though her sense of religion and her calm disposition prevented her from breaking out into any excess of affliction,* she never, even for years afterwards, could allude to her son without melting into tears ; and in her letters or notes to Lady Marlborough she signs herself from this period, "your *poor, unfortunate*, faithful Morley.

There was, however, a strong party in the kingdom who openly exulted in the death of the prince, because it removed one obstacle to the restoration of James II. It is certain that the princess wrote to her father to announce the death of her son ; and at the same time she respectfully inquired whether he would give her his sanction to accept the throne, which had been settled on her by the Parliament. James replied by an absolute prohibition, charging her, upon her allegiance, and as she valued her duty to him and to Heaven, to do nothing contrary to the rights of her brother (afterwards called the Pretender). This letter plunged Anne into such extreme dismay and perplexity, that when her father died some months afterwards at St. Germain's, it must have afforded great relief to her conscience. "Some natural tears she shed, but wiped them soon ;" and her filial grief was speedily forgotten in the contemplation of her own high destinies. The health of King William was at this time fast declining : his death was hastened by a fall from his horse, in consequence of which he died, on the 8th of March, 1702, in the 52d year of his age.

* Bishop Burnet says, that "the queen attended on her son during his sickness with great tenderness, but with a grave composedness that *amazed all who saw it*, and that she bore his death with a resignation and piety which were *indeed very singular*." It must be confessed that the Bishop has a very *singular* method of expressing himself at times.

He was a great military commander rather than a great king, and utterly deficient in those amiable feelings and social accomplishments which render greatness attractive; he never could conciliate the love of the nation he had delivered, and was always unpopular. The horse on which he was mounted at the time of his accident had belonged to a man who had been executed for high treason against him, which gave occasion to the credulous populace to suppose that the accident was some especial judgment of Providence.

On his death Anne was immediately proclaimed queen; her scruples, if she had any, were for the present laid aside. There was a ridiculous story current that the Pretender (who had been acknowledged King of England by Louis XIV.) was not really the son of James II., but a child who had been introduced into the palace in a warming-pan. Anne, to reconcile her conduct to herself or to her friends, affected at this time to give some credit to this tale, and doubt the legitimacy of her brother. The fact is, that she was placed in a very peculiar situation: if she had refused the crown, the Electress of Hanover would have been called over by one party, and the Pretender, Prince James, by another, and England would have been threatened by all the horrors of a civil war: she therefore acted for the best, and was guided by those around her.

To understand the following sketch of the great events of the reign of Anne, it will be necessary to recall to memory the situation of affairs at home and abroad at the period of her accession.

About this time the people of England, Ireland, and Scotland were divided into two great parties. One party maintained those principles through which the Revolution of 1688 had been accomplished. They maintained, that a king ruled for the good of his subjects, and derived his power from them, and that by any illegal or oppressive conduct on the part of a king, his people were justified in dethroning him, and choosing another. They maintained that the Reformed religion being the religion of the state, a Roman Catholic could not lawfully be placed at the head of the state; that James II. had forfeited his rights to the throne, and that as his son could not

inherit claims that were justly forfeited, he also was excluded by the voice of the nation in Parliament; that the *Protestant succession* (that is, the succession of the House of Hanover, upon the death of Queen Anne) was authorized by the laws of the land. The persons who maintained these opinions were called *Whigs*.

The contrary party maintained that the sovereign derived his power from God only, and not from the people; that to depose a king, however wicked, was in itself criminal, except when the religion of the state was endangered; that although the Parliament might depose James II. it could not take from his family the hereditary and divine right of succession. They objected in general to the Brunswick family, and were supposed to be favourable to the exiled Stuarts. They detested the Presbyterians and Dissenters, and they feared the Roman Catholics; they identified the English Church with the English government. People of this party were called *Tories*.*

There were many truly honest and well-informed men of both parties, for these were matters of prejudice and opinion: nor must it be forgotten that, though the words Whig and Tory are still used to distinguish two parties in the state, they have varied a good deal from their original signification in the reign of Anne.†

The leading men of the Tory party were the Dukes of Ormond, Shrewsbury, and Buckingham; Lord Bolingbroke;

* The more inveterate and violent Tories, who carried these principles to an extreme, and would be content with nothing less than the restoration of James II. and his son, were called *Jacobites*, from Jacobus, the Latin for James.

† These two words had already been in use for thirty or forty years, but not generally, and were at first applied as terms of derision and reproach. "Whig-a-more was a nickname given to the western peasantry of Scotland, from their using the word frequently in driving strings of horses. Hence, as connected with Calvinistic doctrines in religion, and republican principles in policy, it was given as a term of reproach to the Opposition party. In the latter years of Charles II. these retorted on the courtiers the word *Toree*, signifying an Irish freebooter, as particularly applicable to the Roman Catholic followers of the Duke of York." (Scott's Edit. of Swift, vol. iii. p. 508.)

Harley (afterwards Earl of Oxford); Hyde, earl of Rochester (uncle to the queen); and Bishop Atterbury. The leading Whigs were the Dukes of Argyle and Wharton; the Dukes of Bedford and Devonshire, with all the Russells and Cavendishes; the Earl of Sunderland, Lord Somers, and Lord Halifax.

In the commencement of the reign of Anne, the Earl of Marlborough was a Tory, but his wife became a Whig, and as a natural consequence Marlborough was soon drawn over to that party. Admiral Churchill, his brother, was a violent Tory; Lord Sunderland, his son-in-law, was a violent Whig; Lady Tyrconnel, the sister of Lady Marlborough, was an enthusiastic Jacobite, and was at this time one of the court of the exiled king. This one instance will give some idea of the manner in which not only the nation but private families were divided by the spirit of faction.

Such was the political state of England at home. Abroad, our situation was most critical; we were on the brink of a terrible war, caused by the ambition of Louis XIV. The four great powers of Europe were at that time France, England, Spain, and Austria. *Russia scarcely took rank as a civilized nation, for the Czar Peter was running about Europe to educate himself, and study the arts of government and ship-building. It was the favourite plan of William III. to preserve what is called in history the "balance of power;" that is, to prevent any one of the four great powers from obtaining such an exorbitant influence, or such an extension of territory, by encroachments on their weaker neighbours, as must endanger the freedom or existence of the others. Now Louis had just placed his grandson, Philip, duke of Anjou, on the throne of Spain, become vacant by the death of Charles II. without heirs. In this he was opposed by the Emperor of Germany, who had claimed that crown for his second son, the Archduke Charles. It was clearly the interest of England to join the allies against the King of France; for Louis had refused to acknowledge the title of Anne, and had shown a determination to support and restore the son of James II. He was likewise so powerful and of such immeasurable ambition, that there was neither peace nor security to his neighbours; and should France and Spain

be ever united under one king, it was evident that no single state could withstand such an overwhelming power. For these reasons it was determined to join the allies (that is, Germany, Holland, Portugal, and Savoy) against Louis XIV., and to espouse the part of the Archduke Charles against Philip V. of Spain. Thus, at the same time, war raged like a conflagration through all the fairest parts of Europe : in Italy, between the French and Austrians ; in the Netherlands, between France and the allies ; in Spain, between Philip and Charles ; and all this bloodshed and desolation were caused by the unreasonable ambition of one man.

Such was the state of things when Anne ascended the throne of England : at home a distracted and divided empire, and abroad the flame of war kindled from one end of Europe to the other. It was a crisis that demanded the vigilant, cautious policy, and the strong, sagacious mind of an Elizabeth. Anne, a woman of weak and narrow understanding, whose whole range of ideas might have been brought within the circumference of her thimble, took up the sceptre as if it had been the badge of rank, not the ensign of power, and put on her crown as she would have put on her cap ; she had some scruples about the justice of her title, but not a doubt about her fitness for the office ; happily for herself, she could not feel or measure the whole extent of her own awful responsibility, else her weak and sensitive mind would have been crushed under the weight. She was a woman of pacific unaspiring disposition, yet her reign was one long sanguinary war ; and though not inclined to expense of any kind and unostentatious to a degree of insipidity, more English treasure was lavished under her government than had ever been known before, and the state incurred debts which have not yet been repaid.

It was very natural and womanlike, that on her accession Anne's first thought should be to favour and elevate those she loved. Her husband, Prince George of Denmark, was appointed Lord High Admiral, and Generalissimo of her forces by sea and land. The prince never showed the slightest disposition to interfere with the government. He was of an easy, indolent disposition, and "knew more than

he could well express ;” * for, though he could speak several languages, he spoke them all equally ill. He belonged to neither party, and appears to have been equally contemned by both. Anne wished to have associated him in the regal dignity and power, but this was not allowed, as being unconstitutional. The Earl of Marlborough was nominated Captain-general of the English armies, and Master of the Ordnance ; and the Queen’s beloved friend, Lady Marlborough, was at the same time appointed Mistress of the Robes, and Keeper of the Privy Purse : two offices of trust and honour requiring an almost constant attendance on the royal person, and thus gratifying at once Anne’s fond affection, and her favourite’s utmost ambition. Remembering that she had heard the Countess admire the Lodge in Windsor Park, Anne conferred on her the rangership and the Lodge *for her life* ; adding in her note on this occasion, “Anything that is of so much satisfaction as this poor place seems to you, I would give dear Mrs. Freeman for all her days.” Nor was this enough ; Lady Marlborough’s two daughters (Lady Harriet Godolphin, and the beautiful and amiable Lady Sunderland) were made ladies of the bedchamber, and Lord Godolphin (in opposition to the queen’s own uncle, Laurence Hyde, earl of Rochester) was made Lord High Treasurer, that is, Prime Minister. Almost all the persons forming Anne’s first ministry were Whigs or moderate Tories.

These arrangements being completed, the queen was crowned at Westminster, on the 23d of April, 1702, with the usual formalities. Her husband merely walked in the procession as first prince of the blood ; and among the young ladies who assisted the Duchess of Somerset in bearing the queen’s train, we find Lady Mary Pierrepont, afterwards the celebrated Lady M. W. Montague.

Immediately afterwards (May 4th) war was declared against the French. The Earl of Marlborough was sent to take the command in the Netherlands ; the Duke of Ormond and the Earl of Peterborough were entrusted with the armies sent into Spain, while Sir George Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovel commanded the fleet.

* Burnet.

The first campaign in the Netherlands, though not distinguished by any great exploit, was very successful, and Marlborough on his return was created a duke. The Duke of Ormond and Sir George Rooke were also successful in Spain. At home the queen gained much popularity by two acts of beneficence: she yielded up 100,000*l.* a year in aid of the public service, and she gave up a large portion of the revenue derived from the Church to the poorer clergy; this is since called "Queen Anne's Bounty."

The following year (1703) Gibraltar was besieged and taken; and this strong fortress, which is of immense value in a commercial and military point of view, has ever since remained in the possession of the English. Marlborough was also, on the whole, very successful in the Netherlands, although no great battle or event occurred to distinguish this year.

In the winter the Archduke Charles, who had been proclaimed King of Spain by the title of Charles III., came to England, on his way to take possession of (or rather to conquer, if he could) his new dominions. He was then eighteen; of a grave and modest deportment. The queen received him with great state at Windsor, and the nobility thronged to pay him attention, and to gaze upon him. He was dependent on the English for all his hopes of winning his kingdom, yet his deference towards the queen was marked with much dignity. It was observed that he never smiled once, yet had the art of seeming pleased with everything, and of leaving a pleasing impression on everybody. This prince was afterwards the father of Maria Theresa, the celebrated empress-queen.

Charles sailed from Portsmouth with 12,000 men, commanded by the brave and chivalrous, but eccentric Earl of Peterborough. They landed in Catalonia, and besieged Barcelona, which was taken by a singular exploit.* After this, a desperate struggle took place in the Peninsula between Philip V. and Charles III. Twice did each of these rival kings enter Madrid in triumph. For seven or eight years a succes-

* Lord Peterborough, with 800 men, attacked and took by storm the fort of Montjoy, which was deemed impregnable, and had resisted 30,000 men for three months.

sion of dreadful battles desolated that beautiful and unhappy country, as during the Peninsular War of our own time, but with a far different result. The English, under Lord Peterborough, greatly distinguished themselves; but in the end the party of Philip V. began to prevail, while that of his competitor, though supported by the English, declined, and was at length overthrown.

Meantime the military genius of the Duke of Marlborough, and his extraordinary successes, made him the terror of the French, and the wonder of all Europe. The Emperor of Germany being threatened in his own dominions, Marlborough advanced to his assistance at the head of his army, and was joined by Prince Eugene, who had hitherto commanded the Austrian armies in Italy. Any detailed account of the military achievements of these two celebrated generals would be impossible in this little work, and probably not very interesting or intelligible, even if it were possible; but one thing is well worth observing and remembering: Marlborough and Eugene were the two most famous commanders of that age; they were at the head of separate armies, which were destined to act in concert; they were both very ambitious of military glory, and it was a question which of the two was the greatest general; yet from the moment they first met, we cannot discover that the slightest jealousy ever existed between them. They had too much real greatness of mind to be susceptible of this base passion. They admired, emulated, praised, and assisted each other. "The Prince Eugene and I will never differ about our share of laurels," said Marlborough, nobly, when they were put in comparison with each other. When a spiteful enemy said of Marlborough, that "he had *once* been fortunate," Eugene immediately replied, "That is the highest praise that could have been bestowed: for since Marlborough has been uniformly successful, and has only once been fortunate, it follows that all his other successes must have been owing to himself." To this union may be imputed their success, and consequently their fame: all their victories put together do them not so much *honour* as their magnanimous admiration and steady friendship for each other.

The battle of Blenheim (called in some histories the battle of Hochstadt) was fought on the 15th of August, 1704, between the allies under the command of Marlborough and Eugene, and the French, commanded by Marshal Tallard and the Elector of Bavaria. The allies obtained a complete victory. The French General-in-chief, about 1,200 officers, and 15,000 men, were taken prisoners; 25,000 men, reckoning those on both sides, were left dead on the field. After this victory, Marlborough and Eugene distinguished themselves as much by their courtesy to the prisoners, and their humanity to the wounded, as by their courage and skill during the conflict. Marlborough, on his return to England, presented his prisoner, Marshal Tallard, to the queen; he received the thanks of the two Houses of Parliament, and was presented with the manor of Woodstock, and a palace built at the national expense, now called Blenheim Park, in memory of the victory. Nothing very particular occurred in the beginning of 1706, except some signal triumphs in Spain, which had given a great check to Philip; but in the month of May, Marlborough gained another victory over the French at Ramilies, a little village in Brabant. The consequences of this victory were very important; many places, among which were Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, and Ostend, which had hitherto resisted or hesitated, now yielded to the allied army, and the best part of the French troops were destroyed. The intelligence was received in England with extreme exultation, except by those whose friends or relatives had perished in the battle, and left them desolate. The name of Anne, and that of her renowned general, were everywhere mingled in shouts, in songs, and in loyal addresses; and the queen went in state to St. Paul's to return thanks to God for these great successes, which were in fact more dazzling than substantial.

From these military affairs we must now turn to an event at home, of far greater importance and more lasting consequence than any battle or campaign—the union between England and Scotland, which was effected during the years 1704 and 1705. Although the two kingdoms had been united under the same sovereign since the time of James I. (1603), yet Scotland had a

separate parliament and privy council. In the year 1706, the two governments were consolidated under one parliament, in which Scotland was represented by sixteen peers and forty-five commons; and in the same year the first BRITISH Parliament assembled, and Anne thenceforward took the title of Queen of Great Britain. Though this famous treaty was much opposed at the time, and excited great murmurs, it is now generally acknowledged to have been greatly beneficial to both kingdoms.

There was something very grand in the position of England at this period. Anne and her victorious general were exceedingly popular; the people paid the taxes cheerfully; commerce had greatly increased; the enormous sums of money sent out of the country to aid our allies, and the immense armies which took the field, filled other nations with astonishment at the magnitude of our wealth and resources, and the prowess and discipline of our soldiers. Louis XIV., hitherto the insolent arbiter of the world, trembled on his throne; and the very name of the English queen was pronounced with respect from one end of Europe to the other.

Anne must have wondered at herself in the midst of all this blaze of glory; but it does not seem to have changed her disposition, or to have drawn forth any expression of feeling or exultation, or gratitude, or humility, beyond what the decorum of her situation required. She went through all the usual forms of government very quietly and creditably; read her speeches to the parliament duly at the opening and close of each session, and signed the papers laid before her. Her domestic life was blameless, but insipid; her amusements of the most trifling character; she was very exact in her court etiquette; and such an observer of mere forms and ceremonies, "that she would often descend so low as to remark in her domestics, of either sex, who came into her presence, whether a ruffle, a periwig, or the lining of a coat were unsuitable at certain times."* She resided with her husband and intimates, sometimes at Windsor, sometimes at Kensington; but appears to have preferred Hampton

* Swift.

Court to either: and there, to use Pope's expression, "she sometimes counsel took—and sometimes tea." But a great and serious change was, in the meantime, gradually taking place in her private sentiments and her household arrangements, which had the most important influence on public affairs. Anne had not a mind sufficiently enlarged to rise superior to her personal antipathies and partialities; and, woman-like more than queen-like, she carried them always about her—even into the councils of the nation. From the very commencement of her reign, the influence of her favourite, the Duchess of Marlborough, had begun to decline; she daily lost her hold on the queen's affections, but by such imperceptible gradations, and from such trifling causes, that Anne was at first as unconscious, as the high-spirited duchess herself was unsuspecting, of such a change. The first estrangement began in political differences. The duchess favoured the Whigs; the queen, in her heart, was inclined to the Tories: thence arose altercations and remonstrances, which became, by recurrence, more bitter and violent. The duchess, presuming on her power and her husband's splendid successes, was contradictory and overbearing. She had great talents, and had long exercised over the mind of Anne the same sorcery which Leonora Galigai exercised over Mary de' Medici, "the ascendancy of a strong mind over a weak one;" but she abused her power, and was too haughty to take care of it. She had an ungovernable temper, which she had never restrained towards her husband, her children, or her household; and now, by long indulgence and increasing age, this vice had grown upon her, till she seemed absolutely to have lost the power to command herself even in the presence of her queen and mistress. Anne, unable to contend against her, feared when she had ceased to love her, and opposed craft, and obstinacy, and dissimulation to the fierce sallies of passion, and sarcastic bitterness of wit, with which the duchess frequently combated her views and opinions.

The meanness to which the poor queen was reduced at this time by her weak terror of her former favourite, and that cunning which is the usual concomitant of feebleness, almost excites our compassion. She was so completely hemmed in by

the duchess and her creatures, that she could not, or dared not, assert any freedom of action. Harley used to receive from her Majesty, little, dirty, crumpled, anonymous notes, conveyed secretly through the hands of the under-gardeners, grooms, and other menials, bribed to silence.

About the year 1707, the Duchess of Marlborough had introduced into the household of the queen a poor relative of her family, who was appointed bedchamber-woman. The name of this person was Abigail Hill, but she is better known in history as Mrs. Masham, being soon after married to Masham, one of the pages at court. Though bound to the duchess by many ties of gratitude, this woman did not scruple to supplant her benefactress.* She became the confidant of the vexation and impatience to which Anne, when relieved from the presence of her haughty favourite, gave way: she admitted 'to secret consultations with the queen those who were intriguing to remove the Duke of Marlborough and his adherents, and prepare the way for a change of ministers more suitable to the temper of the queen. Harley and St. John, two ambitious and subtle men, had gained over the bedchamber-woman, and through her influence they secretly and gradually obtained a power, which subverted the favour of the duchess, overthrew Marlborough at the head of his vast armies, and rendered his victories useless.

When the duchess discovered, to her unspeakable astonishment, the influence of "a creature," whom she had hitherto considered with a sort of contemptuous pity, but who supplied by obsequious attention and good-humour the want of talents, she was furious. She demanded of the queen that Mrs. Masham should be dismissed; and when Anne evaded this insolent request, she persecuted the poor queen with continual complaints and remonstrances, appeals to their former friendship, and complaints of present coldness and ingratitude; as if

* The character which Swift draws of Mrs. Masham (see his *Enquiry into the Behaviour of the Queen's last Ministry*) is too evidently partial to be trusted. She was a mere commonplace, good sort of woman;—perhaps it may be said, that in the circumstances in which she was placed she *could not help* supplanting the duchess, who was ever her own worst enemy.

aversion could have been talked away, and affection scolded back.

While things were in this situation at home, the Duke of Marlborough was pursuing his successes abroad, and the pride of Louis was everywhere humbled : one or two victories which his generals gained in Spain, particularly the battle of Almanza, where Lord Peterborough was completely defeated, a little revived his drooping spirits ; but he lost ground daily, and the English seized on the Mediterranean islands.

In the battle of Oudenarde, Marlborough and Prince Eugene were again victorious : this battle, which almost annihilated the French power in the Netherlands, was fought on the 11th of July, 1708 ; the carnage was not so great as in some of the other battles, but still it was dreadful. The news of the battle was received in England with great exultation : the queen wrote a gracious letter to the Duke of Marlborough, and there was a public thanksgiving at St. Paul's, to which the queen went in state. The Duchess of Marlborough, as Mistress of the Robes, was in the same carriage with the sovereign, and as the cavalcade moved slowly along, hailed by the shouts and huzzas of the multitude, the queen was tormented all the way by the taunts and jealous complaints of the duchess, because her Majesty had not chosen to wear her jewels as she had arranged them. She ascribed this to unkindness, and to the interference of Mrs. Masham ; and thus did this indiscreet and passionate woman aggravate, at every opportunity, the disgust and displeasure of the queen. Soon after the ceremony she sought an interview, in which she continued the same tone of insolent invective ; the altercation became so violent, that the loud voice of the duchess was heard in the antechamber, and when she came out her eyes were suffused with tears ; the queen was found in a similar state of agitation, and the breach had now become incurable.

At this period the queen was thrown into great agitation by a proposal among the Whigs to invite over the Electoral Prince of Hanover, the heir presumptive to the crown, and allow him to take his seat in parliament as Duke of Cambridge. She was alarmed—she felt herself insulted ; “it is a thing,” said she, in a letter to Marlborough, “that I cannot

bear, to have my successor here, though but for a week." By Marlborough's interference she was spared this mortification; but her hatred to the Whigs was increased. She was obliged to make concessions to them, because otherwise Marlborough would have thrown up his command; but therefore she only hated them the more, and particularly the duchess, who had long been the moving principle of that party. By her husband's advice she now absented herself entirely from court, and went down into the country, to fret and brood over all the agony and bitter feelings that wait on mortified pride, wounded affection, and exasperated temper.

In the midst of these perplexities Anne lost the small degree of support and comfort she might have derived from her husband. Prince George of Denmark had never enjoyed the slightest consideration on his own account, and his death was scarcely felt or noticed beyond the circle of the court; but to Anne it was a deep affliction: she watched him in his last illness with all the tenderness of a wife, and all the solicitude of a nurse; she sat up with him for six nights: at length he sank under his disorder, which was a confirmed asthma, and expired at Kensington Palace in October 1709.

The Duchess of Marlborough was at Windsor when the tidings of the prince's danger reached her. To do her justice, this woman, with her talents, her spirit, her generosity, her frankness, her really warm affections, would have been a noble creature, but for the chief vice of her character—that proud ungovernable temper, which at times converted her into a fury, rendered her good qualities useless, and aggravated all her faults. On hearing of the danger of Prince George, she wrote the following note to the queen:—

"Though the last time I had the honour to wait on your Majesty, your usage of me was such, as was scarce possible for me to imagine, or for anybody to believe, yet I cannot hear of so great a misfortune and affliction to you, as the condition in which the prince is, without coming to pay my duty and inquiring after your health; and to see if in any particular whatsoever, my service can either be agreeable or useful to you, for which satisfaction I would do more than I would trouble your Majesty to read at this time."

This note is very characteristic: a woman of a gentler spirit would, at such a moment, have spared the reproach at the commencement; a woman of less heart—such a woman as Queen Anne herself, “content to dwell in decencies for ever”—would have finished her game at cards, and never have thought of writing at all. The duchess, after despatching a messenger with this billet, ordered her carriage at midnight, and reached Kensington Palace the next morning.

While Anne was watching by her husband's sick-bed, she was surprised by a note from the Duchess of Marlborough, entreating admission: the queen consented, but received her coolly; even in that moment the feeling of aversion was uppermost in her mind. But the duchess, whose attachments were as strong as her temper was violent, and whose best feelings were roused, would not be repelled. She remained with her, supported her through this sad scene, and when the prince had breathed his last, she tenderly removed her royal mistress from the chamber of death, led her from the gaze of the surrounding attendants into her closet, and there, kneeling down at her feet, soothed her with the most affectionate expressions, till the first burst of agony was over. She then entreated her to remove to St. James's, and leave a place, which was no longer a fit residence for her, and where every object only added to the poignancy of her sorrow; she offered her own carriage to convey her thither at the instant, and at length prevailed. The queen then giving her watch to the duchess, desired her to retire till the hand had reached a certain point, and to send Mrs. Masham to her. The duchess, stung to the soul, retired; she had not sufficient command over her feelings or her temper to send in the favourite, who at such a moment was preferred to herself; but on returning merely said, “Your Majesty may send for Mrs. Masham at St. James's, when and how you please:” the queen said no more on the subject, but Mrs. Masham was at St. James's ready to receive her; and the duchess, by this sacrifice of her pride to her affection, gained nothing, apparently, but added pain and mortification. The assertion of Dean Swift, that “the deportment of the Duchess of Marlborough, while the prince lay expiring, was of such a nature that the queen, then in the

height of her grief, was not able to bear it," is certainly incorrect. He was evidently unacquainted with the particulars, and hated the duchess.

In the next two years (1709 and 1710) we find Louis XIV. reduced almost to despair. This wretched old man, who had begun his reign with such unexampled splendour, was now by his own ambition and arrogance fallen so low, as to sue for the peace he might once have dictated: but it was refused, except on terms to which he would not accede. The war continued to rage abroad, while the queen, occupied with petty intrigues at home, was contriving with Harley and Mrs. Masham the means of removing a ministry that she at once feared and detested, but under whose auspices England had certainly reached a height of power and glory almost unequalled in history. Lord Sunderland, who was now Secretary of State, she regarded with a species of antipathy; he was at the head of the Whigs, and he was the Duchess of Marlborough's favourite son-in-law.

The measures prepared and concerted for disgracing the ministry were retarded for a while by another great victory gained by Marlborough and Prince Eugene over the French at Malplaquet, September 11, 1709. The two armies met on a plain to the south of Mons, a large town in Flanders; they were nearly equal, consisting each of about 120,000 men, and the French were commanded by Marshal Villars, the greatest of all their generals. In this "*very murdering battle*," as Marlborough truly called it in his letters, about 20,000 men fell on the side of the allies, and near 14,000 of the French, who were defeated. The queen's brother, the Chevalier St. George, who fought on the side of the French, was desperately wounded. Marlborough displayed his usual humanity after the battle, and did all in his power to alleviate the horrible sufferings of the wounded. About 3,000 of these miserable wretches lay mangled in the neighbouring woods, and were sought out and immediately relieved by the English general, whose compassion after a battle extended equally to friends and enemies. Nor was it only the soldiers opposed in deadly combat who were to be pitied. What crimes, what disease, what public and private misery, what wretchedness and desola-

tion were spread through that once fertile and happy country, which had become the seat of war—where death and suffering not in one, but in a thousand horrid forms, were loosed abroad ! The greatest part of the Netherlands lay wasted by pestilence and famine. “It is impossible,” writes the victorious general to his wife, “to be sensible of the misery of this country without seeing it ; at least one half of the people in the villages, since the beginning of last winter, are dead, and the rest look as if they came out of their graves.” He says in another place, “The misery of these poor people is such, one must be a brute not to pity them.” Can we read of these things, and yet suffer ourselves to be dazzled by the “pride, pomp, and circumstance of *glorious war* ?”*

If Marlborough hoped that this victory would reinstate him in his favour at court, or purchase a speedy and advantageous peace, he was in both respects deceived. All that he gained abroad, his duchess was losing at home by her jealous pride and her tempestuous passions. In vain her husband remonstrated in the strongest terms he could use without bringing down a storm upon his own head, and warned her against the consequences of her indiscretion. He said, very sensibly, “It has always been my observation in disputes, especially in those of kindness and friendship, that all reproaches, though ever so

* See also the account of the siege of Tournay, in this campaign (1709), where an appalling subterraneous war was carried on in the mines, the most horrible that imagination can conceive. The miners frequently met and fought with each other in the dark ; sometimes the troops, mistaking friend for foe, killed their own comrades ; sometimes whole companies entered the mines when they were ready primed for explosion. Hundreds of men were stifled together, inundated with water, suffocated with smoke, or buried alive in the cavities, and left to perish by degrees—a death the thought shrinks from. On some occasions whole battalions were blown up into the air, and their limbs scattered to a distance, like lava from a volcano. It was more like a contest of fiends carried on in an infernal labyrinth, than the combat of men and soldiers ; and let it be remembered, this is only a passing, partial glimpse of a picture which, if it could be spread out before us at once in all the strong colouring of reality, would appal the most unfeeling, and fill the tender-hearted with pity and horror. (*Vide Cox’s History of the Duke of Marlborough.*)

reasonable, do serve to no other end but to make the breach the wider :” anybody, when cool, would confess the truth of this. But some demon of fury and indiscretion seemed to have possessed the Duchess of Marlborough, and blinded her to consequences. When once the queen had said in her calm, cool manner, “It is impossible for you to recover my former kindness ; but I shall behave myself to you as the Duke of Marlborough’s wife, and my groom of the stole,” dignified retirement and silent submission were all that were left to the duchess ; but this strange, unreasonable woman sent the queen a long list of all her own merits and services, and claims on the royal gratitude, accompanied by the “Whole Duty of Man,” with the page doubled down at the chapter on friendship, and extracts out of sermons ! Anne could not cope with her discarded favourite in eloquence and violence, but she could resist and dissemble ; above all, she could hold her tongue. In a few weeks, all the measures so long prepared became known, and the disgrace of Marlborough, and the change of administration were openly talked of and discussed. The duchess had gone down in the country and was trying to keep herself quiet, but hearing that she had been accused of speaking disrespectfully of the queen, she came posting up to town in a fresh transport of indignation. Besides being from her hasty temper her own worst enemy, she had made herself many other enemies, by her turn for satire and ridicule, and her severe wit. She excelled, it is said, “in exposing knaves, and painting fools,” and the knaves and the fools were now too strong for her. She drove to Kensington, where she forced herself into the queen’s presence, and desired to know who had charged her with saying anything disrespectful, and what she was accused of ? The queen had armed herself against this crisis in sullen silence and endurance ; and to the eloquent vindication and passionate questions of the duchess, she merely replied that she would give her no answer. In vain the duchess entreated, remonstrated, appealed to her justice, to her kindness, to her compassion ; the queen moved towards the door, repeating, with the same sullen determination, “I shall make no answer to anything you say.” The duchess burst into tears of mingled rage and feeling, and then went on with the same

volubility. The queen replied precisely in the same words and tone, "You shall have no answer:" the duchess then exclaimed, with offensive violence, "I am confident you will suffer in this world or the next for so much inhumanity." The queen immediately left the room, saying as she shut the door, "That is my business." The duchess in an agony of rage, humiliation, and wounded affection, withdrew; she sat down in the gallery, to wipe away her tears, and again returning to the door of the queen's closet, she said that she would refrain from going to the Lodge at Windsor, if her Majesty *would not be easy to see her*. The queen replied, "You may, if you please, come to the castle; it will give me no uneasiness." The duchess then left the palace; they met no more, and thus ended this memorable friendship, which, from the first unequal and ill-founded, did not deserve to last, and with it ended the ministry, and with the ministry the war.

A series of disputes and intrigues ensued, and several minor events, among which was the trial of Dr. Sacheverel, for preaching a seditious sermon—a circumstance unimportant in itself, but which was made to serve the purposes of a faction, and to inflame the populace almost to frenzy. Never, perhaps, did party spirit rage in a manner at once so disgraceful, so vicious, and so ludicrous. It was not the strife of principles; it was not, like the civil wars of the preceding century, a grand struggle between liberty and despotism; it was a vile spirit of faction, which had filled the nation with spleen and rancour, and extinguished all the seeds of good-nature, compassion, and humanity;* which had affected at once the morals and the common sense of the people, and even interfered with the administration of justice. The women, instead of tempering the animosities of the time, blew up the flame of discord. Addison,

* How completely the heat of party could extinguish even the natural feelings of humanity is proved by a singular passage in Swift's Journal: "Lady Masham's eldest boy is very ill; I doubt he will not live; and she stays at Kensington to nurse him, which vexes us all. She is so excessively fond, it makes me mad. She should never leave the queen, but leave everything, to stick to what is so much the interest of the public as well as her own. This I will tell her, but talk to the winds."

in some of the most elegant papers of the *Spectator*, attempted to mitigate this evil spirit. He attacked the men with grave humour, and with graver argument : he endeavoured to bring back the women to the decorum and reserve of their sex by the most exquisite raillery,—that delicate mixture of satire and compliment in which he excelled. He reminded these “petticoat politicians” and viragos of the tea-table, that party spirit was in its nature a male vice made up of many angry passions, which were altogether repugnant to the softness, modesty, and other endearing qualities proper to their sex. He assured them there was nothing so injurious to a pretty face as party zeal—that he had never known a pretty woman who kept her beauty for a twelvemonth ; and he conjured them, as they valued their complexions, to abstain from all disputes of this nature. Every one will recollect the admirable description of the Whig ladies and the Tory ladies, drawn up in battle array at the Opera, and patched, by way of distinction, on opposite sides of the face ;—the perplexity of the Whig beauty, who had a mole on the Tory side of her forehead, which exposed her to the imputation of having gone over to the enemy ; and the despair of the Tory partisan, whom an unlucky pimple had reduced to the necessity of applying a patch to the wrong side of her face. But it was all in vain ; a transient smile might have been excited at such palpable absurdity, some partial good was perhaps effected, but fashion and faction were far too strong to be acted upon by wit or argument, or eloquence, or satire.

At a time when a low-bred, artful, ignorant bed-chamber woman, with no more sense than would have sufficed to smooth a crumpled ribbon or comb a lapdog, possessed supreme power, and Swift, Arbuthnot, Harley, Bolingbroke, were dancing attendance in her ante-room, it was in vain to preach to women the forbearance and reserve proper to their sex, to point out the confined sphere of their duties, or to remind them of the advice of Pericles to the Athenian women, “not to make themselves talked of one way or another.”* Mrs. Masham ruled the queen, but she was herself the contemptible tool of a set of designing men. In the end she and her tutor Harley triumphed;

* *Spectator*, No. 81.

—the Tories prevailed, the Whigs were all turned out : Marlborough was not only disgraced at court, but, by a sudden turn of feeling produced in the popular mind by the calumnies and contrivance of his enemies, he became an object of contempt and hatred ; and he whose victories had been hailed with such national pride and exultation, found himself “ baited with the rabble’s curse.” This might have been contemned, for mere popular clamour dies away, and leaves no trace on the dispassionate page of history ; but when Swift, the political gladiator of that time, collected all his terrible powers of invective and satire and sarcasm, and fell upon the devoted general, branding, stabbing, and slashing at every stroke, he left the duke standing like a column scathed by the thunderbolt, and the lapse of a century has hardly enabled us to distinguish the truth from the falsehood of his rancorous libel.

The queen, in whose mind resentment and aversion had become a rooted antipathy, finding that the duchess would not resign, determined to remove her ; she sent to demand, in the most insulting manner, the gold key, which was the Duchess of Marlborough’s badge of office as Groom of the Stole.* How she could have retained it through all these scenes of altercation, when feeling and dignity, honour and propriety seemed alike to forbid it, is marvellous ; but pride will stoop to strange meanness. Perhaps she wished to torment the queen ; perhaps to conceal from the public the full extent of her disgrace. At all events, she waited till she was compelled to resign it, and until, to exhibit the climax of court degradation, her husband had fallen on his knees before Anne, to entreat her to spare her former friend this last and deepest mortification—and kneeled in vain ! Anne possessed, in a superlative degree, that obstinacy of temper which is said to have been the vice and the destruction of all the Stuart race. When Marlborough pleaded for a short delay, only a few weeks, she answered by demanding the key in three days. When he expostulated farther, she limited the time to two. He quitted her in despair. The same evening the duchess sent him back with the key. Anne, taken by surprise at his re-appearance, and equally destitute of native

* Otherwise, Mistress of the Robes.

dignity and presence of mind, could only stammer an unintelligible reply as she took it from him; he bowed and withdrew. Why he did not at the same time resign all his own offices, appears singular; but, from some motives not satisfactorily explained, he retained them. He waited, as his wife had done, to be discharged like a supernumerary servant. His fall was already decreed, and, after another short but successful campaign in Holland, he appeared at court, and, to use the words of Swift, "no one spoke to him." The next day he was dismissed from all his employments, on charges of peculation and abuse of the public money, some of which were false, and some exaggerated. It is well known that the Duke of Marlborough's reigning foible was the love of money, and that his courtesy was tinged with duplicity; but it must also be acknowledged that he was a great, an illustrious, and in many respects a good man.

The duke and duchess afterwards went abroad, and their history is not further connected with that of Anne. The duke bore his disgrace with mildness and dignity; not so his turbulent, impetuous wife. Stung in every feeling, and incapable of self-command, she descended to every vulgar excess of insolence and spite. No loss of court favour could have so degraded her as she afterwards degraded herself. She threatened to publish the private and confidential letters which the queen had written to her in the days of their early fondness: and this threat she partly executed, but not till after the death of Anne. She had a beautiful little portrait of the queen in enamel, and set round with brilliants, one of Anne's first gifts to her. She took it out of the setting, and gave it to an old woman, known about the court as a dealer in fans, toys, old china, &c. with permission to sell it for anything she could get for it: Harley, with politic liberality, sent for the woman and gave her a hundred pounds for it;* it was not worth twenty. Many other instances of her paltry malice and furious temper are recorded; but it is painful to multiply these anecdotes, or to dwell longer upon such an exhibition of meanness, heartlessness,

* Swift's Work—Journal to Stella. He adds, after telling the story, "Is she not a detestable slut?"

and duplicity one side, and pride, passion, and selfishness on the other.*

The two principal men of the new ministry were Harley, now Earl of Oxford, created High Treasurer, and the famous St. John, Lord Bolingbroke. The Duke of Ormond succeeded the Duke of Marlborough as commander of the forces, and under these auspices a peace was effected—the famous peace of Utrecht, signed in the beginning of 1713. It is the opinion of great statesmen that this treaty was very disgraceful to England. Doubtless it was right to put an end to the horrors of war, only justifiable as long as inevitable, and it was generous to grant favourable terms to a prostrate enemy; but after fourteen or fifteen years of battle, and fierce struggles, and victories purchased by such enormous cost of blood and treasure, to make peace on terms no better than might have been procured before—by the abandonment of our allies, and by the violation of every principle upon which the war was first undertaken—seems rather lamentable and foolish, and not a little dishonourable and treacherous.

Philip V. was settled on the throne of Spain; Charles, his competitor, became, by the death of his brother, Emperor of Germany. Anne was acknowledged by Louis as Queen of England, and the Pretender abjured. The arrangements for our commerce were considered so unfavourable to the

* The Duchess of Marlborough died in 1744. So little do people know themselves, at least those in whom worldly pride and temper obscure the power of self-judgment, that this woman, who had tormented her husband (whom she adored), and alienated her children and her grandchildren; who would hardly suffer those around her to draw their breath but by her will; whose life was one long warfare upon earth—a species of female salamander, who lived in the very elements of contention,

By spirit robbed of power, by warmth of friends,
By wealth of followers,—

went down to the grave complaining that all the people in the world were so disagreeable, she had never found anything to love. It is impossible to deny that she had some fine qualities, and infinitely more talent than any of the statesmen opposed to her, except Bolingbroke; but she had three faults, which, when found together, are enough to convert a woman into a demon—ambition, avarice, and ill-temper.

country, that when the peace was proclaimed, it was amid mingled shouts and execrations. It was regarded at the time not so much as a concern of national and public interest, as a mere party affair, which the Tories were bound to support, and the Whigs equally bound to detest.

The rest of Queen Anne's reign exhibits nothing to interest ; it was inglorious, but peaceful. The Tory party, into whose hands she had fallen, infused into her mind many conscientious scruples about retaining her sovereignty, to the exclusion of her brother—scruples which she dared not avow ; and when the Parliament addressed her on the subject of the Pretender, who had threatened to invade England, and proposed that a price should be set on his head, she was compelled to thank "her faithful Commons" for their obliging care, while her real sentiments were precisely the contrary. She doubted her own rights, she believed in those of her brother, and she cordially detested the Brunswick family and her destined successor. With these sentiments, the plain path of duty was before her—she ought to have ceased to wear the crown ;* but it required far more magnanimity than she possessed to resign it ; and such a step would certainly have caused great confusion in the kingdom. She continued, therefore, to reign, and tried to temporize with her conscience, by indulging the idea that her brother would eventually be restored after her death. On the disgrace of the Duchess of Marlborough, the Duchess of Somerset was appointed Groom of the Stole, and Lady Masham Keeper of the Privy Purse. These two women enjoyed the greatest influence with Anne during the remainder of her life. The duchess was a woman of illustrious family : proud, but well-meaning ; as remarkable for her knowledge of court etiquette, and her exact observance of forms, as the frank and fiery-spirited

* It is said that she really did entertain the idea of ceding the crown to her brother, and consulted Bishop Wilkins (called the Prophet) to know what would be the consequence of such a step ; he replied, "Madam, you would be in the Tower in a month, and dead in three." This answer, dictated by common sense, her Majesty took for inspiration, and dropped all thoughts of resigning the crown. (*Vide Walpole's Reminiscences.*)

Duchess of Marlborough had been for her negligence, or rather her defiance, of both : she favoured the Whig party. Lady Masham, on the contrary, was in the interest of the banished Stuarts : that is, a Jacobite. Anne had all the jealousy of power, and fear of being governed, natural to a mind consciously weak ; and both had been increased by her connexion with the Duchess of Marlborough. "Having received some hints that she had formerly been too much governed, she grew very difficult to be advised." "Often, out of fear of being imposed upon, by an over caution, she would impose upon herself ; she took a delight in refusing those who were thought to have the greatest power with her, even in the most reasonable things, and such as were necessary for her service, nor would let them be done till she fell into the humour of it herself." *

She now, with petty cunning, contrived to balance her two favourites against each other, by first inclining to one and then to the other ; and the effect of this management was to increase her own perplexities, by keeping her councils in perpetual fluctuation ; her days were vexed and embittered by the dissensions of her Parliament and the animosities of her ministers. She had no resources within herself which might have rendered her burthen tolerable : to this may be attributed the disgraceful habit of drinking into which she fell latterly ; and which, though indulged cautiously and in private, assisted in undermining her health, and farther weakened her intellects.

Although Anne, in her best days, was merely a dull, un-informed woman, without activity of mind, and without the slightest taste for literature or the arts, yet her reign is celebrated as exhibiting an assemblage of remarkable men, all living about the same period ; and we speak habitually of the "wits of Queen Anne's time," as we do of the "poets of the Elizabethan age." The wits of Queen Anne were Pope, Swift, Gay, Prior, Arbuthnot ; Addison and Steele ; Congreve, Parnell, Granville (afterwards Lord Lansdowne), and Bishop Atterbury.

Of these celebrated men it may be observed, that some were pensioned and some were patronised by her ministers, and repaid this patronage by adulation ; which has sometimes

* Swift.

degraded the wit and poet, while it immortalised the patron. Such men, for instance, as Secretary Craggs and Lord Halifax* owe more to Pope and Prior than the poets ever owed to them. Not one of the men above enumerated was personally distinguished by Anne herself ;† it may be doubted whether she ever read the “Rape of the Lock,” which was published about three years before her death. Pope also produced, during her reign, the “Messiah,” the “Temple of Fame,” “Windsor Forest,” &c., and began the translation of the *Iliad*, which was published in the following reign.

But the men whose writings produced the most immediate and important influence on their own times were Swift, Addison, and Steele. Swift was then chiefly known as a party-writer and satirist on the Tory side, and as the creature of Harley and Bolingbroke. Addison and Steele were Whigs, and wrote under the patronage of Marlborough and Halifax. The *Tatler* was commenced by Steel in April 1709, and carried on in conjunction with Addison till March 1711. Two months afterwards appeared the first number of the *Spectator*, which was likewise carried on for about two years.

These two celebrated works exercised an influence over the manners and morals of that time which we can scarcely estimate in these days, but by a reference to contemporary works. In the *Tatler*, Steele maintained an unwearied and successful warfare against infidelity, gambling, duelling, drinking, swearing—vices which, since the days of Charles II., had been *fashionable* in the highest society. He was the first who armed wit and satire on the side of religion, virtue, and decorum ;‡ who made impudence appear vulgar, and ignorance ridiculous. Under the influence of his elegant

* The Earl of Halifax was elevated into very undeserved distinction by his poetical flatterers and satirists. He became the Mæcenas of his time, at very small cost ; “fed with soft dedication all day long,” he gave in return only good words and good dinners.

† Except Arbuthnot, who was the court physician.

‡ This is spoken generally : there is one paper in the *Tatler*, in which the satire is cruel and personal, and virtue placed in a ridiculous point of view. It is written by Swift, with all his peculiar talent, humour, and coarseness of feeling.

and good-humoured admonitions and exquisite raillery the conversation and amusements of the women became less frivolous, those of the men less gross; while Addison, by many beautiful papers in the *Spectator*, particularly those on the "Paradise Lost;" on "Chevy Chase," and the old ballads; on picturesque gardening (till then unknown, except in Milton's poetry); on true and false wit; on the tragedies and operas of the time, prepared the way for a better taste in art and in criticism than had yet prevailed; rendered literature more popular, and even made fine ladies and beaux look to their orthography.

The *Spectator* and *Tatler* are not so generally read now as they were forty or fifty years ago; on all points of information, taste, and criticism they have been superseded or become antiquated; we have a new æra in literature, and unbounded liberty of conscience in criticism; it is no longer heresy to differ from Addison, nor is the fiat of Dr. Johnson like the law of the Medes and the Persians. It must be confessed, too, that the subject and style of many of these papers, which were then to be found on the toilet or tea-table of every lady, old and young, married or unmarried, would not be tolerated in these days of refinement. It is there, however, we must look to see reflected, as in a sparkling mirror, the very age and body of that time; we have ceased to consult the *Tatler* and *Spectator* as guides in morality or criticism; but as pictures of manners and costume they are ever rich in amusement and information. It is here we find chronicled in all their importance the tremendous periwigs and red-heeled shoes of the gentlemen, and the expansive hoops and flame-coloured hoods of the ladies. What can be more admirable in their way, or convey a more lively idea of the manners and information of the women, than the papers of the exercises of the fan, the catalogue of Leonora's library, and the account of the boarding-school for teaching parrots to speak civilly and grammatically? Yet the decrees of the *Spectator* were not always infallible; his denunciations against operas and riding-habits (then a new and terrible innovation) remind us of Madame de Sevigné's prophecy, that coffee and Racine "would be forgotten together."

It is worth while to remark, that a taste for the opera and Italian music began to be fashionable in Anne's time. I use the word *fashionable*, for it was at first considered as a species of affectation, and ridiculed as such by Swift and other wits. In the first opera ("Arsinoë") which was publicly performed, in 1704, they had only English singers, who sang in their native language. When Valentina, Nicolini, and La Margarita, the first Italian opera singers, came over, they sang their parts in Italian, while the rest of the *dramatis personæ* sang in English. This strange absurdity was endured for several seasons. It was not till the beginning of 1710 that an opera was performed wholly in Italian, and by Italian singers; it was entitled "Almahide," but the name of the composer is not known. In the same year occurred the great musical event of Anne's reign,—the arrival of Handel, and the representation of his first opera, the "Rinaldo."

The only eminent painter of Queen Anne's time was Sir Godfrey Kneller; he was merely a portrait painter, and does not rank high in his art. Sir Christopher Wren and Sir John Vanbrugh were the principal architects; both were men of original genius, and the latter a dramatic writer and a wit, as well as a first-rate artist.

After the peace of Utrecht, the reign of Anne offers little to interest. It is now very well known that she changed her ministry, and signed this famous treaty, with a hope of restoring her brother, the Pretender, to the English throne, though one of the principal articles stipulated his banishment from France; and at the very time that the proclamation was in force offering a reward for his head, she received him secretly in her closet, by the connivance of Harley and Mrs. Masham. Who would severely blame Anne for this political duplicity? We can but pity a kind-hearted and conscientious woman placed by her evil stars in a situation which made the indulgence of natural affections and generous feelings not only illegal but criminal; involving a breach of the laws she had herself promulgated, and of the oaths she had solemnly sworn; compromising, at the same time, her kingdom's peace, her people's freedom, and her own truth and honour.

Towards the close of her life the queen suffered much from

continual attacks of the gout, and her disorder was increased by the necessity of attending the privy councils, where, the ministers being divided, there was nothing but murmuring, altercation, and discontent. These disputes and intrigues were the more disgusting, because we cannot trace the appearance of patriotism and public spirit in any of the statesmen who surrounded Anne at this time. The Duke of Ormond appears to have been the most honest, and Bolingbroke the most able ; but it was a continual scene of paltry struggles for office and power, mixed up with the vilest party spirit, and the most barefaced self-interest.

In the year 1714 the Princess Sophia, Electress of Hanover, who had been declared the heiress to these kingdoms, died suddenly while walking in the garden of her palace ; she was a woman of uncommon capacity and spirit ; and though nearly eighty, had looked forward to the English throne. She had often declared that she should die content, if she could live to have inscribed on her tomb—"Sophia, Queen of Great Britain." On her death, her son, George of Brunswick, became the heir apparent to the British crown.

The queen's health continued to decline, and her situation among the turbulent, intriguing men around her appears very pitiable. The disputes between Oxford and Bolingbroke became so violent that not even her presence as a lady and their sovereign could restrain them within the bounds of decorum. Lord Oxford at length suddenly resigned his office of treasurer ; there was a privy council held in consequence, which lasted till two o'clock in the morning, and so agitated and fatigued the poor queen, that she declared she could not survive it : this was on the 29th of July ; soon afterwards she was seized with a kind of apoplexy, of which, after lingering almost insensible for two days, she expired on the 1st of August, 1714, in the 50th year of her age : she had reigned twelve years and four months.


Queen Anne had been rather handsome in her youth ; her features were regular, and her figure well proportioned, but her countenance was without interest and her deportment without dignity. If she had lived in a private station, she would have passed through the world as an amiable woman ;

and if the same qualities which make a good housewife would have made an efficient sovereign, she would have been exemplary. Those about her were aware of her mental deficiencies; they supplied or concealed them, and availed themselves of her weakness for their own purposes. The people at large beheld her from a distance; they regarded her with affection and reverence, as an amiable wife and mother, and a strict Protestant, who protected them from the horrors of French invasion, Pretenders, Popery, and wooden shoes, all of which were mixed up together in the popular imagination. They loved her for her gracious manners, her blameless life, and her merciful sway: and her subjects of all parties united in giving her the appellation of "Good Queen Anne;" but History will pause before it ratifies that most expressive and comprehensive title.



MARIA THERESA,

EMPRESS OF GERMANY AND QUEEN OF HUNGARY.

 MARIA THERESA succeeded to the vast hereditary possessions of the House of Austria by the conditions of a famous treaty, called in history the Pragmatic Sanction. By this political instrument the usual course of succession in families was set aside: and, as it subsequently involved in its consequences, not only the fate of Maria Theresa, but the destinies of Europe, it is necessary to have a clear idea of its origin and intention, before we can fully understand the situation of this queen in the commencement of her reign.

Though the title of Emperor of Germany was, by the constitution of the empire, elective, yet the imperial dignity had remained in the House of Hapsburgh for upwards of four centuries. Joseph I. died in 1711, leaving two daughters in their minority. He bequeathed the Austrian dominions to his brother, the Emperor Charles VI., on condition that if the latter had no son to inherit the throne, then the daughters of Joseph were to succeed in preference to the daughters of Charles: this arrangement, which had been solemnly signed and ratified by the two brothers, in presence of their father Leopold I., was called the Family Compact. It happened that Charles VI. had only one son, who died in his infancy. Two daughters survived, in whom the emperor concentrated his affections and his ambition. It now became his favourite plan to set aside the Family Compact, and to transfer the right of succession from his two nieces to his own daughters.

For this purpose he framed the treaty entitled the Pragmatic Sanction, and to secure its fulfilment, either by negotiation or force of arms, became henceforth the object of his life. It was guaranteed successively by Spain, England, Prussia, Russia, and Holland. Among the minor states of Germany it met with more opposition; the Elector of Bavaria, who had married the eldest daughter of the late Emperor Joseph, and the Elector of Saxony, who had espoused the youngest, were naturally averse to an arrangement so contrary to their interests: at length, however, all obstacles were overcome; the Family Compact was annulled, and the Pragmatic Sanction, declaring Maria Theresa the heiress of the House of Austria, was finally ratified.

The woman for whose sake her father had prevailed on all Europe to sanction the violation of a solemn engagement, was at least not unworthy of the throne to which she was destined. The virtues and talents of Maria Theresa, and the splendid part she played on the theatre of Europe for forty years, render her a fair example of what a woman gifted with a good understanding and actuated by amiable impulses may become, at the head of a mighty empire; of all that she may achieve for the good of others, and all that she must risk or resign of virtue and happiness in herself.

Maria Theresa of Austria was born at Vienna on the 13th of May, 1717, and received at her baptism the names of Maria-Theresa-Valperga-Amelia-Christina. Her father, Charles VI., was a man of a slow and phlegmatic temper, a narrow capacity, and a grave and formal deportment: he was seldom seen to smile, and was only once known to laugh. He attached the most extraordinary importance to the observance of courtly etiquette, yet was not without good sense, and the capability of strong domestic affections: he appears, however, to have had but two passions—hunting and music; he was himself an amateur composer, and found time to write an opera, which was performed with great splendour in the theatre of his palace. The imperial musician presided in his own orchestra, and his two daughters, Maria Theresa and Maria Anne, danced in the ballet. His passion for this amusement was indulged at a considerable expense to the State; for Lady M. W. Montagu mentions an opera which she saw at Vienna in 1716, of which

the decorations and dresses cost the Emperor thirty thousand pounds. We might be inclined to pardon this extravagance, recollecting that we perhaps owe to Charles VI. the finest works of Metastasio, whom he called from Italy to compose the operas for his court ; but all the rewards bestowed on the poet during fifty years of service did not amount to the sums lavished on the gorgeous and tasteless decorations of this single opera. It should not be omitted, while speaking of the character of Charles, that he was remarkable for a compassionate and benevolent disposition, for honest intentions, and for an extreme aversion to all hypocrisy, so that although he was naturally reserved and haughty, he could scarce, even from necessity, dissemble his thoughts and feelings. These qualities were not, however, sufficient to ensure either his own or his people's happiness. His reign was, upon the whole, one of the most disgraceful and disastrous in the history of the empire.

The mother of Maria Theresa was Elizabeth Christina, of Brunswick, a lovely and amiable woman, who possessed and deserved her husband's entire confidence and affection. Lady Wortley Montagu, who visited the court of Vienna only a few months before the birth of Maria Theresa, speaks of the beauty and beneficence of the empress, and of her sweet and gracious manners, with a kind of rapture. She gives us, too, a very amusing description of the stupid and trivial etiquette of a court at once dissipated and punctilious, solemn and splendid.

The two archduchesses were brought up under the superintendence of their mother, and received an education in no respect different from that of other young ladies of rank, of the same age and country, except that they were kept in more strict seclusion. Maria Theresa had beauty, spirit, and understanding. Marianna was as lovely as her sister, but inferior in capacity, and of a very mild and reserved disposition ; both sisters were tenderly attached to each other.

While Charles gave up many a sleepless night, and put in action all the subtlest springs of diplomacy to secure to his daughter the possession of a throne, it does not appear to have entered into his calculation to give her an education befitting the situation to which she was destined ; he, indeed, admitted her at the age of fourteen to be present at the sittings of the

council, for, as declared heiress of the crown, it was a point of custom, and of that state etiquette which he was never known to infringe ; but he never disclosed to her any of his affairs, never conversed with her on any subject of importance, never even allowed her an opportunity of acquiring a knowledge of the forms of business. While she sat in the council she was always silent ; but it was observed that, however protracted the deliberations, she never betrayed any signs of weariness, but listened with the most eager attention to all she could, and all she could not, understand. The only use she made of her new privilege was to be the bearer of petitions in behalf of those who prevailed on her benevolence, or her youthful inexperience, to intercede for them. The Emperor, becoming at length impatient at the increasing number of these petitions, said to her on one occasion, " You seem to think a sovereign has nothing to do but to grant favours ! " " I see nothing else that can make a crown supportable," replied his daughter : she was then about fifteen.

In those accomplishments to which her time was chiefly devoted, Maria Theresa made rapid progress. She inherited from her father a taste for music, which was highly cultivated, and remained to the end of her life one of her principal pleasures. She danced, and moved with exquisite grace. Metastasio, who taught her Italian, and also presided over her musical studies, speaks of his pupil with delight and admiration, and in his letters he often alludes to her talent, her docility, and the sweetness of her manners. Of her progress in graver acquirements we do not hear ; much of her time was given to the strict observance of the forms of the Roman Catholic faith ; and though she could not derive from the bigoted old women and ecclesiastics around her any very enlarged and enlightened ideas of religion, her piety was at least sincere. She omitted no opportunities of obtaining information relative to the history and geography of her country, and she appears to have been early possessed with a most magnificent idea of the power and grandeur of her family, and of the lofty rank to which she was destined. This early impression of her own vast importance was only counterbalanced by her feelings and habits of devotion, and by the natural sweetness and benignity of her disposition.

Such was Maria Theresa, at the age of sixteen or seventeen. She had been destined from her infancy to marry the young Duke of Lorraine, who was brought up in the court of Vienna, as her intended husband. It is very, very seldom that these political state marriages terminate happily, or harmonize with the wishes and feelings of those principally concerned ; but in the present case "the course of true love" was blended with that of policy. Francis Stephen of Lorraine was the son of Leopold, duke of Lorraine, surnamed the Good and the Benevolent. His grandmother, Leonora of Austria, was the eldest sister of Charles VI., and he was consequently the cousin of his intended bride. Francis was not possessed of shining talents, but he had a good understanding and an excellent heart ; he was, besides, eminently handsome, indisputably brave, and accomplished in all the country exercises that became a prince and a gentleman. In other respects his education had been strangely neglected ; he could scarcely read or write. From childhood the two cousins had been fondly attached, and their attachment was perhaps increased—at least on the side of Maria Theresa—by those political obstacles which long deferred their union, and even threatened at one time a lasting separation. Towards the end of his reign the affairs of Charles VI., through his imbecility and misgovernment, fell into the most deplorable and most inextricable confusion. Overwhelmed by his enemies, unaided by his friends and allies, he absolutely entertained the idea of entering into a treaty with Spain, and offering his daughter, Maria Theresa, in marriage to Prince Charles, the heir of that monarchy.

But Maria Theresa was not of a temper to submit quietly to an arrangement of which she was to be made the victim : she remonstrated, she wept, she threw herself for support and assistance into her mother's arms. The empress, who idolized her daughter, and regarded the Duke of Lorraine as her son, incessantly pleaded against this sacrifice of her daughter's happiness. The English minister at Vienna* gives the following lively description of the state of affairs at this time, and of the feelings and deportment of the young arch-duchess :—"She is," says Mr. Robinson, "a princess of the

* Mr. Robinson, afterwards the first Lord Grantham of his family.

highest spirit ; her father's losses are her own. She reasons already ; she enters into affairs : she admires his virtues, but condemns his mismanagement ; and is of a temper so formed for rule and ambition, as to look upon him as little more than her administrator. Notwithstanding this lofty humour, she sighs and pines for her Duke of Lorraine. If she sleeps, it is only to dream of him ; if she wakes, it is but to talk of him to the lady-in-waiting ; so that there is no more probability of her forgetting the very individual government, and the very individual husband which she thinks herself born to, than of her forgiving the authors of her losing either."

Charles VI., distracted and perplexed by the difficulties of his situation, by the passionate grief of his daughter, by the remonstrances of his wife, and the rest of his family, and without spirit, or abilities, or confidence in himself or others, became a pitiable object. During the day, and while transacting business with his ministers, he maintained his accustomed dignity and formality ; but in the dead of the night, in the retirement of his own chamber, and when alone with the empress, he gave way to such paroxysms of affliction, that not his health only, but his life was endangered, and his reason began to give way. A peace with France had become necessary on any terms, and almost at any sacrifice ; and a secret negotiation was commenced with Cardinal Fleury, then at the head of the French government, under—or more properly speaking, *over*—Louis XV. By one of the principal articles of this treaty, the duchy of Lorraine was to be given up to France, and annexed to that kingdom, and the Duke of Lorraine was to receive, in lieu of his hereditary possessions, the whole of Tuscany. The last Grand Duke of Tuscany of the family of the Medici, the feeble and degenerate Cosmo III., was still alive, but in a state of absolute dotage, and the claims of his heiress, Anna de' Medici, were to be set aside. Neither the inhabitants of Lorraine, nor the people of Tuscany, were consulted in this arbitrary exchange. A few diplomatic notes between Charles's secretary, Bartenstein, and the crafty old cardinal, settled the matter. It was in vain that the government of Tuscany remonstrated, and in vain that Francis of Lorraine overwhelmed the Austrian ministers with reproaches,

and resisted, as far as he was able, this impudent transfer of his own people and dominions to a foreign power. Bartenstein had the insolence to say to him, "Monseigneur, point de cession, point d'Archiduchesse." Putting love out of the question, Francis could not determine to stake his little inheritance against the brilliant succession which awaited him with Maria Theresa. The alternative, however, threw him into such agony and distress of mind, that even his health was seriously affected. But peace was necessary to the interests, and even to the preservation of the empire. Lorraine was given up, and the reversion of the grand duchy of Tuscany settled upon Francis.* The preliminaries of this treaty being signed in 1735, the emperor was relieved from impending ruin, and his daughter from all her apprehensions of the Prince of Spain; and no farther obstacles intervening, the nuptials of Maria Theresa and Francis of Lorraine were celebrated at Vienna in February 1736. By the marriage contract the Pragmatic Sanction was again signed and ratified, and the Duke of Lorraine solemnly bound himself never to assert any personal right to the Austrian dominions. The two great families of Hapsburgh and Lorraine, descended from a common ancestor, were by this marriage reunited in the same stock.

Prince Eugene, who had commanded the Imperial arms for nearly forty years, died a few days after the marriage of Maria Theresa, at the age of seventy-three. His death was one of the greatest misfortunes that could have occurred at this period, both to the emperor and the nation.

A young princess, beautiful and amiable, the heiress of one of the greatest monarchies in Europe, married at the age of eighteen to the man whom she had long and deeply loved, and who returned her affection, and soon the happy mother of two fair infants, presents to the imagination as pretty a picture of splendour and felicity as ever was exhibited in a romance or fairy tale; but, when we turn over the pages of history, or look into real life, everywhere we behold the hand of a just Providence equalising the destiny of mortals.

* Tuscany has ever since remained in the family of Lorraine; the present Grand Duke, Leopold II., is the great grandson of Francis.

During the four years which elapsed between Maria Theresa's marriage and her accession to the throne, her life was embittered by anxieties, arising out of her political position. Her husband was appointed generalissimo of the Imperial armies against the Turks, in a war which both himself and Maria Theresa disapproved. He left her in the first year of their marriage to take the command of the army, and more than once too rashly exposed his life. Francis had more bravery than military skill; he was baffled and hampered in his designs by the weak jealousy of the emperor and the cabals of the ministers and generals. All the disasters of two unfortunate campaigns were imputed to him, and he returned to Vienna disgusted, irritated, sick at heart, and suffering from illness. The court looked coldly on him; he was unpopular with the nation and with the soldiery; but his wife received him with open arms, and, with a true woman's tenderness, "loved him for the dangers he had passed:" she nursed him into health; she consoled him; she took part in all his wrongs and feelings, and was content to share with him the frowns of her father and the popular dislike. They were soon afterwards sent into a kind of honourable exile, into Tuscany, under the pretence of going to take possession of their new dominions; and in their absence it was publicly reported that the emperor intended to give his second daughter to the Elector of Bavaria, to change the order of succession in her favour, and disinherit Maria Theresa. The archduchess and her husband were more annoyed than alarmed by these reports; but their sojourn at Florence was a period of constant and cruel anxiety. Maria Theresa had no sympathies with her Italian subjects; she had no poetical or patriotic associations to render the "fair white walls of Florence," and its olive and vine-covered hills interesting or dear to her: she disliked the heat of the climate; she wished herself at Vienna, whence every post brought some fresh instance of her father's misgovernment, some new tidings of defeat or disgrace. She mourned over the degradation of her house, and saw her magnificent and far-descended heritage crumbling away from her. The imbecile emperor, without confidence in his generals, his ministers, his family, or himself, exclaimed in

an agony, "Is then the fortune of my empire departed with Eugene?"—and he lamented hourly the absence of Maria Theresa, in whose strength of mind he had ever found support, when his pride and jealousy allowed him to seek it. The archduchess and her husband returned to Vienna in 1739, and soon afterwards the disastrous war with the Turks was terminated by a precipitate and dishonourable treaty, by which Belgrade was ceded to the Ottoman Porte. The situation of the court of Vienna at this period is thus described by the English minister, Robinson: "Everything in this court is running into the last confusion and ruin, where there are as visible signs of folly and madness as ever were inflicted on a people whom heaven is determined to destroy—no less by domestic divisions than by the more public calamities of repeated defeats, defencelessness, poverty, plague, and famine."

Such was the deplorable state in which Charles bequeathed to his youthful heiress the dominions which had fallen to him prosperous, powerful, and victorious, only thirty years before. The agitation of his mind fevered and disordered his frame, and one night, after eating most voraciously of a favourite dish,* he was seized with an indigestion, of which he expired October 20th, 1740. Maria Theresa, who was then near her confinement, was not allowed to enter her father's chamber: we are told that the grief she felt on hearing of his dissolution endangered her life for a few hours, but that the following day she was sufficiently recovered to give audience to the ministers. The necessary measures were taken to secure her peaceful succession, and she was proclaimed at Vienna, without any of that tumult and opposition which had been anticipated by her timid and desponding council.

Maria Theresa was in her twenty-fourth year when she became, in her own right, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduchess of Austria, Sovereign of the Netherlands, and Duchess of Milan, of Parma, and Placentia; in right of her husband she was also Grand Duchess of Tuscany. Naples and Sicily had indeed been wrested from her father; but she pretended to the right of those crowns, and long enter-

* Mushrooms stewed in oil.

tained the hope and design of recovering them. She reigned over some of the finest and fairest provinces of Europe—over many nations, speaking many different languages, governed by different laws, divided by mutual antipathies, and held together by no common link, except that of acknowledging the same sovereign. That sovereign was now a young, inexperienced woman, who had solemnly sworn to preserve inviolate and indivisible the vast and heterogeneous empire transmitted to her feeble hand, as if it had depended on her will to do so. Within the first few months of her reign, the Pragmatic Sanction, so frequently guaranteed, was trampled under foot. France deferred, and at length declined, to acknowledge her title.* The Elector of Bavaria, supported by France, laid claim to Austria, Hungary, and Bohemia. The King of Spain also laid claim to the Austrian succession, and prepared to seize on the Italian States; the King of Sardinia claimed Milan; the King of Prussia, not satisfied with merely advancing pretensions, pounced like a falcon on his prey:—

“*Spiegato il crudo sanguinoso artiglio*”—

and seized upon the whole duchy of Silesia, which he laid waste and occupied with his armies.

Like the hind of the forest when the hunters are abroad, who hears on every side the fierce baying of the hounds, and stands and gazes round with dilated eye and head erect, not knowing on which side the fury of the chase is to burst upon her—so stood the lovely Majesty of Austria, defenceless and trembling for her very existence; but not weak, nor irresolute, nor despairing.

Maria Theresa was by no means an extraordinary woman. In talents and strength of character she was inferior to Catherine of Russia and our Elizabeth; but in moral qualities far superior to either: and it may be questioned whether the

* The French Government had secretly matured a plan of partition, by which the inheritance of Maria Theresa was to have been divided among the different claimants in the following manner: Bohemia and Upper Austria were assigned to the Elector of Bavaria; Moravia and Upper Silesia to the Elector of Saxony; Lower Silesia to the King of Prussia; and Lombardy to the King of Spain.

brilliant genius of the former, or the worldly wisdom and sagacity of the latter, could have done more to sustain a sinking throne, than the popular and feminine virtues, the magnanimous spirit and unbending fortitude of Maria Theresa. She had something of the inflexible pride and hereditary obstinacy of her family; her understanding, naturally good, had been early tinged with bigotry, and narrowed by illiberal prejudices; but in her early youth these qualities only showed on the fairer side, and served but to impart something fixed and serious to the vivacity of her disposition, and the yielding tenderness of her heart. She had all the self-will, and all the sensibility of her sex; she was full of kindly impulses and good intentions; she was not naturally ambitious, though circumstances afterwards developed that passion in a strong degree; she could be roused to temper, but this was seldom, and never so far as to forget the dignity and propriety of her sex. It should be mentioned, for in the situation in which she was placed it was by no means an unimportant advantage, that at this period of her life few women could have excelled Maria Theresa in personal attractions. Her figure was tall and formed with perfect elegance, her deportment at once graceful and majestic; her features were regular; her eyes were grey, and full of lustre and expression; she had the full Austrian lips, but her mouth and smile were beautiful; her complexion was transparent; she had a profusion of fine hair; and, to complete her charms, the tone of her voice was peculiarly soft and sweet. Her strict religious principles, or her early and excessive love for her husband, or the pride of her royal station, or perhaps all these combined, had preserved her character from coquetry. She was not unconscious of her powers of captivation; but she used them not as a woman, but as a queen—not to win lovers, but to gain over refractory subjects. The "fascinating manner" which the historian records, and for which she was so much admired, became, later in life, rather too courtly and too artificial; but at four-and-twenty it was the result of kind feeling, natural grace, and youthful gaiety.

The perils which surrounded Maria Theresa at her accession were such as would have appalled the strongest mind. She

was not only encompassed by enemies without, but threatened with commotions within : she was without an army, without a treasury, and, in point of fact, without a ministry ; for none was such a set of imbecile men collected together to direct the government of a kingdom, as those who composed the *Conférence*, or State-council of Vienna, during this period. They agreed but in one thing : in jealousy of the Duke of Lorraine, whom they considered as a foreigner, and who was constrained to perform to remain a mere cipher.

Maria Theresa began her reign by committing a mistake very excusable at her age. Her father's confidential minister, Bartenstein, continued to direct the government, though he had neither talents nor resources to meet the fearful exigencies which they were placed. The young queen had sufficient sagacity to penetrate the characters of Sinzendorf and Staremborg ; she had been disgusted by their attempts to take advantage of her sex and age, and to assume the whole power to themselves. She wished for instruction, but she was of a temper to resist anything like dictation. Bartenstein discovered her foible : by his affected submission to her judgment, and admiration of her abilities, he conciliated her good opinion. His knowledge of the forms of business, which extricated her out of many little embarrassments, she mistook for political sagacity ; his presumption, for genius ; his volubility, his readiness with the pen, all conspired to dazzle the understanding and win the confidence of an inexperienced woman. It is generally allowed that he was a weak and superficial man ; but he possessed many good qualities : he was sincerely attached to the interests of the House of Austria ; and, as a minister, incorruptible.

In her husband Maria Theresa found ever a faithful friend, and comfort and sympathy when she most needed them, but hardly advice, support, or aid. Francis was the soul of honour and affection, but he was illiterate, fond of pleasure, and unsuited to business. Much as his wife loved him, she either loved him more, or was conscious of his inability to wield it. Had he been an artful or an ambitious man, Francis might easily have obtained over the mind of Maria Theresa that unbounded influence which a man of sense can always exercise over an affectionate woman ; but, humbled by her superiority of rank,

awed by her superiority of mind, he never made the slightest attempt to guide or control her, and was satisfied to hold all he possessed from her love or from her power.

The first war in which Maria Theresa was engaged was begun in self-defence : never was the sword drawn in a fairer quarrel or a juster cause. Her great adversary was Frederic II. of Prussia, aided by France and Bavaria. On the side of the young queen were England and Holland. Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm which her helpless situation had excited among the English of all ranks: the Queen of Hungary was a favourite toast, her head a favourite sign. The Parliament voted large subsidies to support her, and the ladies of England, with the old Duchess of Marlborough at their head, subscribed a sum of 100,000*l.*, which they offered to her acceptance. Maria Theresa, who had been so munificently aided by the king and Parliament, either did not think it consistent with her dignity to accept of private gifts, or from some other reason declined the proffered contribution.

The war of the Austrian succession lasted nearly eight years. The battles and the sieges, the victories and defeats, the treaties made and broken, the strange events and vicissitudes which marked its course, may be found duly chronicled and minutely detailed in histories of France, England, or Germany. It is more to our present purpose to trace the influence which the character of Maria Theresa exercised over passing events, and their re-action on the fate, feelings, and character of the woman.

Her situation in the commencement of the war appeared desperate.* Frederic occupied Silesia, and in the first great battle in which the Austrians and Prussians were engaged (the battle of Molwitz), the former were entirely defeated. Still the queen refused to yield up Silesia, at which price she might have purchased the friendship of her dangerous enemy. Indignant at his provoked and treacherous aggression, she disdainfully refused to negotiate while he had a regiment in Silesia, and rejected all attempts to mediate between them. The birth of

* In 1741, being near her confinement, she wrote despondingly to her mother-in-law,—“I know not whether a single town will remain to me in which I may bring forth my child in safety.”

her first son, the Archduke Joseph, in the midst of these distresses, confirmed her resolution : maternal tenderness now united with her family pride and her royal spirit, and to alienate voluntarily any part of his inheritance appeared not only a humiliation but a crime. She addressed herself to all the powers which had guaranteed the Pragmatic Sanction, and were therefore bound to support her,—and first to France. To use her own words, “I wrote,” said she, “to Cardinal Fleury : pressed by hard necessity, I descended from my royal dignity, and wrote to him in terms which would have softened stones !” But the old cardinal was absolute *flint*. From age and long habit he had become a kind of political machine, actuated by no other principle than the interests of his government ; he deceived the queen with delusive promises and diplomatic delays till all was ready ; then the French armies poured across the Rhine, and joined the Elector of Bavaria. They advanced in concert within a few leagues of Vienna. The elector was declared Duke of Austria, and, having overrun Bohemia, he invested the city of Prague.

The young queen, still weak from her recent confinement, and threatened in her capital, looked round her in vain for aid and counsel. Her allies had not yet sent her the promised assistance ; her most sanguine friends drooped in despair ; her ministers looked upon each other in blank dismay. At this crisis the spirit of a feeling and high-minded woman saved herself, her capital, and her kingdom. Maria Theresa took alone the resolution of throwing herself into the arms of her Hungarian subjects.

Who has not read of the scene which ensued, which has so often been related, so often described ? and yet we all feel that we cannot hear of it too often. When we first meet it on the page of history we are taken by surprise, as though it had no business there ; it has the glory and the freshness of old romance. Poetry never invented anything half so striking, or that so completely fills the imagination.

The Hungarians had been oppressed, enslaved, insulted by Maria Theresa’s predecessors. In the beginning of her reign she had abandoned the usurpations of her ancestors, and had voluntarily taken the oath to preserve all their privileges entire.

This was partly from policy, but it was also partly from her own just and kind nature. The hearts of the Hungarians were already half-won when she arrived at Presburg, in June 1741. She was crowned Queen of Hungary on the 13th, with the peculiar national ceremonies; the iron crown of St. Stephen was placed on her head, the tattered but sacred robe thrown over her own rich habit, which was encrusted with gems, his scimeter girded to her side. Thus attired, and mounted upon a superb charger, she rode up the Royal Mount,* and, according to an antique custom, drew her sabre, and defied the four quarters of the world, "in a manner that showed she had no occasion for that weapon to conquer all who saw her."† The crown of St. Stephen, which had never before been placed on so small or so lovely a head, had been lined with cushions to make it fit; it was also very heavy, and its weight, added to the heat of the weather, incommoded her; when she sat down to dinner in the great hall of the castle, she expressed a wish to lay it aside. On lifting the diadem from her brow, her hair loosened from confinement fell down in luxuriant ringlets over her neck and shoulders; the glow which the heat and emotion had diffused over her complexion added to her natural beauty, and the assembled nobles, struck with admiration, could scarce forbear from shouting their applause.

The effect which her youthful grace and loveliness produced on this occasion had not yet subsided when she called together the Diet or Senate of Hungary, in order to lay before them the situation of her affairs. She entered the hall of the castle habited in the Hungarian costume, but still in deep mourning for her father; she traversed the apartment with a slow and majestic step, and ascended the throne, where she stood for a few minutes silent. The Chancellor of the State first explained the situation to which she was reduced, and then the queen coming forward addressed the assembly in Latin, a language which she spoke fluently, and which is still in common use among the Hungarians.

"The disastrous state of our affairs," said she, "has moved

* A rising ground near Presburg, so called from being consecrated to this ceremony.

† Mr. Robinson's despatches.

us to lay before our dear and faithful states of Hungary the recent invasion of Austria, the danger now impending over this kingdom, and propose to them the consideration of a remedy. The very existence of the kingdom of Hungary, of our own person, of our children, of our crown, are now at stake, and, forsaken by all, we place our sole hope in the fidelity, arms, and long-tried valour of the Hungarians !”

She pronounced these simple words in a firm but melancholy tone. Her beauty, her magnanimity, and her distress roused the Hungarian chiefs to the wildest pitch of enthusiasm : they drew their sabres half out of the scabbard, then flung them back to the hilt with a martial sound, which re-echoed through the lofty hall, and exclaimed with one accord, “Our swords and our blood for your Majesty ! we will die for our *king*, Maria Theresa !” Overcome by sudden emotion she burst into a flood of tears. At this sight the nobles became almost frantic with enthusiasm. “We wept too,” said a nobleman who assisted on this occasion (Count Koller), “but they were tears of admiration, pity, and fury.” They retired from her presence to vote supplies of men and money which far exceeded all her expectations.*

Two or three days after this extraordinary scene, the deputies again assembled, to receive the oath of Francis of Lorraine, who had been appointed Co-Regent of Hungary. Francis, having taken the required oath, waved his arm over his head and exclaimed with enthusiasm, “My blood and life for the queen and kingdom !” It was on this occasion that Maria Theresa took up her infant son in her arms, and presented him to the deputies ; and again they burst into the acclamation, “We will die for Maria Theresa and her children !”†

- * “——Fair Austria spreads her mournful charms,
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms ;
From hill to hill the beacon’s towering blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise ;
- The fierce Croatian, and the wild Hussar,
With all the sons of ravage, crowd the war !”

DR. JOHNSON, *Vanity of Human Wishes*.

† September 21st, 1741. The Archduke Joseph was then about six months old. It was not when Maria Theresa made her speech to the

The devoted loyalty of her Hungarian subjects changed the aspect of her affairs. Tribes of wild warriors from the Turkish frontiers, Croats, Pandours, and Sclavonians, never before seen in the wars of civilized Europe, crowded round her standard, and by their strange appearance and savage mode of warfare struck terror in the disciplined soldiers of Germany. Vienna was placed in a state of defence, and Frederic, fallen from his "pitch of pride," began to show some desire for an accommodation. At length a truce was effected by the mediation of England, and the queen consented with deep reluctance and an aching heart to give up a part of Silesia, as a sop to this royal Cerberus. Hard necessity compelled her to this concession, for while she was defending herself against the Prussians on one side, the French and Bavarians were about to overwhelm her on the other. The Elector of Bavaria had seized on Bohemia, and was crowned King of Prague; and under the auspices and influence of France he was soon afterwards elected Emperor of Germany, and crowned at Frankfort, by the title of Charles VII.

It had been the favourite object of Maria Theresa to place the imperial crown on the head of her husband. The election of Charles was therefore a deep mortification to her, and deeply she avenged it. Her armies, under the command of the Duke of Lorraine and General Kevenhuller, entered Bavaria, wasted the hereditary dominions of the new emperor with fire and sword, and on the very day on which he was proclaimed at Frankfort, his capital Munich surrendered to the Austrians, and the Duke of Lorraine entered the city in triumph;—such were the strange vicissitudes of war!

Within a few months afterwards the French were everywhere beaten; they were obliged to evacuate Prague, and accomplished with great difficulty their retreat to Egra. So much was the queen's mind embittered against them, that their escape at this time absolutely threw her into an agony; she had, however, sufficient self-command to conceal her indignation and disappointment from the public, and celebrated the surrender of

Diet on the 13th that she held up her son in her arms, for it appears that he was not brought to Presburg till the 20th. Voltaire, whose account is generally read and copied, is true in the main, but more eloquent than accurate.

Prague by a magnificent fête at Vienna. Among other entertainments there was a chariot-race in imitation of the Greeks, in which, to exhibit the triumph of her sex, ladies alone were permitted to contend, and the queen herself and her sister entered the lists : it must have been a beautiful and gallant sight. Soon afterwards Maria Theresa proceeded to Prague, where she was crowned Queen of Bohemia, May 12, 1743.

In Italy she was also victorious. Her principal opponent in that quarter was the high-spirited Elizabeth Farnese, the reigning queen of Spain.* This imperious woman, who thought she could manage a war as she managed her husband, commanded her general, on pain of instant dismissal, to fight the Austrians within three days : he did so, and was defeated.

At the close of this eventful year, Maria Theresa had the pleasure of uniting her sister Marianna to Prince Charles of Lorraine, her husband's brother. They had been long attached to each other, and the archduchess was beautiful and amiable ; but an union which promised so much happiness was mournfully terminated by the death of Marianna within a few months after her marriage.

The effect produced on the mind of Maria Theresa by these sudden vicissitudes of fortune and extraordinary successes was not altogether favourable. She had met dangers with fortitude, she had endured reverses with magnanimity, but she could not triumph with moderation ; sentiments of hatred, of vengeance, of ambition, had been awakened in her heart by the wrongs of her enemies and her own successes. She indulged a personal animosity against the Prussians and the French, which almost shut her heart, good and beneficent as Heaven had formed it, against humanity and the love of peace. She not only rejected with contempt all pacific overtures, and refused to acknowledge the new emperor, but she meditated vast schemes of conquest and retaliation ; she not only resolved on recovering Silesia, and appropriating Bavaria, but she formed plans for crushing her great enemy, Frederic of Prussia, and partitioning his dominions, as he had conspired to ravage and dismember hers.

* Third wife of Philip V. ; her story is very prettily told by Madame de Genlis, in "*La Princesse des Ursins*."

This excess of elation was severely chastised. In 1744, she lost Bavaria. Frederic suspected and anticipated her designs against him ; with his usual celerity he marched into Bohemia, besieged and captured Prague, and made even Vienna tremble. Maria Theresa had one trait of real greatness of mind—she was always greatest in adversity. She again had recourse to her brave Hungarians, and repairing to Presburg she employed with such effect her powers of captivation, that she made every man who approached her a hero for her sake. The old Palatine of Hungary, Count Palffy, unfurled the blood-red standard of the kingdom, and called on the magnates to summon their vassals, and defend their queen ; 44,000 men crowded round the national banner, and 30,000 more were ready to take the field. Maria Theresa, who knew as well as Mary Stuart herself the power of a woman's smile, or word, or gift, bestowed *à propos*, sent to Count Palffy on this occasion her own charger, royally caparisoned, a sabre enriched with diamonds, and a ring, with these few words in her own handwriting :—

“ FATHER PALFFY,—I send you this horse, worthy of being mounted by none but the most zealous of my faithful subjects : receive, at the same time, this sword to defend me against my enemies, and this ring as a mark of my affection for you.

“ MARIA THERESA.”

The enthusiasm which her charms and her address excited in Hungary, from the proudest palatine to the meanest peasant, again saved her. In the following year Bohemia and Batavia were recovered ; and the unfortunate emperor, Charles VII., driven from all his possessions, after playing for awhile a miserable pageant of royalty in the hands of the French, died almost broken-hearted ;* with his last breath he exhorted his successor to make peace with Austria, and reject the imperial dignity which had been so fatal to his family. The new elector, Maximilian Joseph, obeyed these last commands, and no other competitor appearing, Maria Theresa was enabled to fulfil the ambition of her heart, by placing the imperial diadem on her

* “ His foes’ derision, and his subjects’ blame,
He steals to death from anguish and from shame !”

DR. JOHNSON, *Vanity of Human Wishes.*

husband's head. Francis was proclaimed Emperor of Germany at Frankfort, and the queen, who witnessed from a balcony the ceremony of election, was the first who exclaimed, "Vive l'Empereur!" From this time Maria Theresa, uniting in herself the titles of Empress of Germany and Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, is styled in history the Empress-queen. This accession of dignity was the only compensation for a year of disasters and losses in Italy and the Netherlands. Still she would not submit, nor bend her high spirit to an accommodation with Frederic on the terms he offered, and still she rejected all mediation. At length the native generosity of her disposition prevailed. The Elector of Saxony,* who had been for some time her most faithful and efficient ally, was about to become a sacrifice, through his devotion to her cause, and only peace could save him and his people. For his sake the queen stooped to what she never would have submitted to for any advantage to herself, and on Christmas Day, 1745, she signed the peace of Dresden, by which she finally ceded Silesia to Frederic, who, on this condition, withdrew his troops from Saxony, and acknowledged Francis as emperor.

The war with Louis XV. still continued, with various changes of fortune; in 1746 she lost nearly the whole of the Netherlands. The French were commanded by Marshal Saxe, the Austrians by Charles of Lorraine. The former was flushed with high spirits and repeated victories; the unfortunate Prince Charles was half distracted by the loss of his wife: the Archduchess Marianna had died in her first confinement, and her husband, paralysed by grief, could neither act himself, nor give the necessary orders to his army.

By this time (1747) all the sovereigns of Europe began to be wearied and exhausted by this sanguinary and burthensome war—all except Maria Theresa, whose pride, wounded by the forced cession of Silesia, and the reduction of her territories in the Netherlands and in Italy, could not endure to leave off a loser in this terrible game of life. It is rather painful to see how the turmoils and vicissitudes of the last few years—the habits of government and diplomacy—had acted on a disposition naturally so generous and so just. In her conference with the English

* Augustus III.

minister she fairly got into a passion, exclaiming with the utmost indignation and disdain, "that rather than agree to the terms of peace, she would lose her head," raising her voice as she spoke, and suiting the gesture to the words. With the same warmth she had formerly declared, that before she would give up Silesia, she would *sell her shift*;—in both cases she was obliged to yield. When the plenipotentiaries of the various powers of Europe met at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, her ministers, acting by her instructions, threw every possible difficulty in the way of the pacification; and when at length she was obliged to accede, by the threat of her allies to sign without her, she did so with obvious, with acknowledged, reluctance, and never afterwards forgave England for having extorted her consent to this measure.

The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was one of the great events of the last century, was signed by the empress-queen on the 23d of October, 1748. "Thus," says the historian of Maria Theresa, "terminated a bloody and extensive war, which at the commencement threatened the very existence of the House of Austria; but the magnanimity of Maria Theresa, the zeal of her subjects, and the support of Great Britain, triumphed over her numerous enemies, and secured an honourable peace. She retained possession of all her vast inheritance, except Silesia, Parma, Placentia, and Guastalla. She recovered the imperial dignity, which had been nearly wrested from the House of Austria, and obtained the guarantee of the Pragmatic Sanction from the principal powers of Europe. She was, however, so dissatisfied, that her chagrin broke out on many occasions; and on none more, than when Mr. Keith requested an audience to offer his congratulations on the return of peace. Maria Theresa ordered her minister to observe that compliments of condolence would be more proper than compliments of congratulation, and insinuated that the British minister would oblige the empress by sparing a conversation, which would be highly disagreeable to her, and no less unpleasant to him.*

Maria Theresa had made peace with reluctance. She was convinced—that is, she *felt*—that it could not be of long continuance; but for the present she submitted. She directed her

* "History of the House of Austria," vol. ii. p. 358.

attention to the internal government of her dominions ; and she resolved to place them in such a condition, that she need not fear war whenever it was her interest to renew it.

She began by entrusting her military arrangements to the superintendence of Marshal Daun, one of the greatest generals of that time. She concerted with him a new and better system of discipline, and was the first who instituted a military academy at Vienna. She maintained a standing army of 108,000 men ; she visited her camps and garrisons, and animated her troops by her presence, her gracious speeches, and her bounties. Her enemy, Frederic, tells us how well she understood and practised the art of enhancing the value of those distinctions which, however trifling, are rendered important by the manner of bestowing them. He acknowledges that "the Austrian army acquired, under the auspices of Maria Theresa, such a degree of perfection as it had never attained under any of her predecessors ; and that a woman accomplished designs worthy of a great man."

But Maria Theresa accomplished other designs, far more worthy of herself and of her sex ; she made some admirable regulations in the civil government of her kingdom ; she corrected many abuses which had hitherto existed in the administration of justice ; she abolished for ever the use of torture throughout her dominions. The collection of the revenues was simplified : the great number of tax-gatherers, which she justly considered as an engine of public oppression, was diminished. Her father had left her without a single florin in the treasury ; in 1750, after eight years of war, and the loss of several states, her revenues exceeded those of her predecessors by six millions. One of her benevolent projects failed, but not through any fault of her own. She conceived the idea of civilizing the numerous tribes of gipsies in Hungary and Bohemia ; but after persevering for years, she was forced to abandon the design : neither bribes nor punishment, neither mildness nor severity, could subdue the wild spirit of freedom in these tameless, lawless outcasts of society, or bring them within the pale of civilization.

All the new laws and regulations, the changes and improvements which took place, emanated from Maria Theresa herself, and they were all, more or less, wisely and benevolently planned,

and beneficial in their effect. It does not appear that she was actuated by the calculating selfishness of Elizabeth, or the ostentation of Catherine II. : motives of personal advantage ruled the first, and an insatiate vanity the other. We trace in Maria Theresa's public conduct two principles, a regard for the honour of her house (that is, her royal and family pride), and a love for her people ; but, from the prejudices in which she had been educated, it frequently happened that the latter consideration was sacrificed to the former. What she designed and performed for the good of her subjects was done quietly and effectually ; and what she wanted in genius was supplied by perseverance and good sense. Though peremptory in temper, jealous of her authority, and resisting the slightest attempt to lead or control her, Maria Theresa had no overweening confidence in her own abilities. She was at first almost painfully sensible of the deficiencies of her education, and of her own inexperience ; she eagerly sought advice and information, and gladly and gratefully accepted it from all persons, and on every occasion she listened patiently to long and contradictory explanations. She read memorials and counter-memorials, voluminous, immeasurable, perplexing ; she was not satisfied with knowing or comprehending everything ; she was, perhaps, a little too anxious to do everything, manage everything herself. While in possession of health and strength she always rose at five in the morning, and often devoted ten or twelve hours together to the despatch of business ; and, with all this close application to affairs, she found time to enter into society, to mingle in the amusements of her court, and to be the mother of sixteen children.

In her plans and wishes for the public good, Maria Theresa had the sympathy, if not the co-operation, of her husband ; but she derived little or no aid from the ministry, or, as it was termed, the Conference, which was at this time (after the conclusion of the first war) more inefficient than even at the period of her accession. She had gradually become sensible of the incapacity and presumption of Bartenstein ; and as he declined in favour and confidence, Count, afterwards Prince Kaunitz rose in her estimation. Kaunitz was ten years older than the empress ; he had spent nearly his whole life in political affairs,

rising from one grade to another through all the subaltern offices of the State. He had been her minister at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748; in 1753 he was appointed Chancellor of State, in other words, Prime Minister, and from this time ruled the councils of the empress-queen to the day of her death, a period of nearly thirty years. Frederic of Prussia describes Kaunitz as "*un homme frivole dans ses goûts, profond dans les affaires :*" from the descriptions of those who knew him personally, he appears to have been a man of very extraordinary talents, without any elevation of character; a finical eccentric coxcomb in his manners; a bold, subtle, able statesman, inordinately vain, and, as his power increased, insolent and overbearing; yet indefatigable in business, and incorruptible in his fidelity to the interests of his sovereign.

Eight years of almost profound peace had now elapsed, and Maria Theresa was neither sensible of the value of the blessing, nor reconciled to the terms on which she had purchased it. While Frederic existed—Frederic, who had injured, braved, and humbled her—she was ready to exclaim like Constance, "War, war! no peace! Peace is to me a war!" In vain was she happy in her family, and literally adored by her subjects; she was not happy in herself. In her secret soul she nourished an implacable resentment against the King of Prussia; in the privacy of her cabinet she resolved the means of his destruction. The loss of Silesia was still nearest her heart, and she never could think of it but with shame and anguish. Mingling the imagination and the sensibility of a woman with the wounded pride of a sovereign, she never could hear the word Silesia without a blush, never turned her eyes on the map, where it was delineated as part of her territories, without visible emotion, and never beheld a native of that district without bursting into tears. She might have said of Silesia, as Mary of England said of Calais, that it would be found after death engraven on her heart. There were other circumstances which added to the bitterness of her resentment. Frederic, who, if not the most detestable, was certainly the most disagreeable and unamiable monarch ever recorded in history, had indulged in coarse and cruel sarcasm against the empress and her husband. They were repeated to her; they were such as equally insulted her delicacy

as a woman and her feelings as a wife, and they sank deeper into her feminine mind than more real and more serious injuries. All Maria Theresa's passions, whether of love, grief, or resentment, partook of the hereditary obstinacy of her disposition. She could not bandy wit with her enemy, it was not in her nature; but hatred filled her heart, and projects of vengeance occupied all her thoughts. She looked round her for the means to realize them; there was no way, but by an alliance with France;—with France, the hereditary enemy of her family and her country!—with France, separated from Austria by three centuries of mutual injuries, and almost constant hostility! The smaller states of Europe had long regarded their own safety as depending, in a great measure, on the mutual enmity and jealousy of these two great central powers. A gulf seemed for ever to divide them; but, instigated by the spite of vengeance, Maria Theresa determined to leap that gulf.

Her plan was considered, matured, and executed in the profoundest secrecy. Even her husband was kept in perfect ignorance of her designs: she was not of a temper to fear his opposition, but her strong affection for him made her shrink from his disapprobation. Prince Kaunitz was her only coadjutor; he alone was entrusted with this most delicate and intricate negotiation, which lasted nearly two years. It was found necessary to conciliate Madame de Pompadour, the mistress of Louis XV., who was at that time all-powerful. Kaunitz, in suggesting the expediency of this condescension, thought it necessary to make some apology. The empress merely answered, "Have I not flattered Farinelli?"*—and taking up her pen, without farther hesitation, this descendant of a hundred kings and emperors, the pious, chaste, and proud Maria Theresa, addressed the low-born profligate favourite as "*ma chère amie*," and "*ma cousine*." The step was sufficiently degrading, but it answered its purpose. The Pompadour was won to the Austrian interest; and through her influence this extraordinary alliance was finally arranged, in opposition to the policy of both courts, and the real interests and inveterate prejudices of both nations.

* She had sent compliments and presents to the singer Farinelli, when he was a favourite in the Spanish court.

When this treaty was first divulged in the Council of Vienna, the emperor Francis was so utterly shocked and confounded, that, striking the table with his hand, he vowed he would never consent to it, and left the room. Maria Theresa was prepared for this burst of indignation; she affected, with that duplicity in which she had lately become an adept, to attribute the whole scheme to her minister, and to be as much astonished as Francis himself. But she represented the necessity of hearing and considering the whole of this new plan of policy before they decided against it. With a mixture of artifice, reason, and tenderness, she gradually soothed the facile mind of her husband, and converted him to her own opinion, or at least convinced him that it was in vain to oppose it. When the report of a coalition between Austria and France was spread through Europe, it was regarded as something portentous. In England it was deemed incredible, or, as it was termed in Parliament, unnatural and monstrous. The British minister at Vienna exclaimed with astonishment, "Will you, the empress and archduchess, so far humble yourself as to throw yourself into the arms of France?" "Not into the arms," she replied, with some haste and confusion, "but on the side of France. I have," she continued, "hitherto *signed* nothing with France, though I know not what may happen: but whatever does happen, I promise, on my word of honour, not to sign anything contrary to the interests of your royal master, for whom I have a most sincere friendship and regard."

When we learn, with pain and regret, that at the time she spoke these words the treaty which united her interests with those of France was already *signed*, we ask, "Was this the high-minded heroine of Presburg? and was the word, the honour of a princess fallen so low, that they could be sacrificed to a mere diplomatic *ruse*?" If the dissimulation were necessary, it is not the less to be regretted: but through this whole affair the means were worthy of the motives, and of the end in view. Her ingratitude to England, her first friend and ally, without whose aid she must have been crushed in the former war, and the want of fair dealing throughout, made a deep and unfavourable impression not only in Europe generally, but on

her own people, her court, and her family : her husband was dissatisfied ; her eldest daughter, the Archduchess *Marianne*, remonstrated ; even the Archduke Joseph, then only sixteen, entreated her not to separate from England, or to connect herself with "perfidious France." Maria Theresa was immoveable.

Such were the unworthy motives and feelings which led to the memorable alliance with France, and converted a benign and estimable woman into a fury of discord : they have since been terribly visited upon her country and her children. The immediate result was the "Seven Years' War," in which Austria, France, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, and afterwards Spain, were confederated against the King of Prussia, who was assisted by Great Britain and Hanover ; and only preserved from destruction by the enormous subsidies of England, and by his own consummate genius and intrepidity.*

Until eclipsed by the great military events of the present century, this war stood unequalled for the skill, the bravery, and the wonderful resource displayed on both sides ; for the surprising vicissitudes of victory and defeat ; for the number of great battles fought within a short period ; for the instances of individual heroism, and the tremendous waste of human life. In the former war our sympathies were all on the side of Maria Theresa. In the seven years' contest, we cannot refuse our admiration to the unshaken fortitude and perseverance with which Frederic defended himself against his enemies. He led his armies in person. The generals of Maria Theresa were Marshal Daun, Marshal Loudon, and Marshal Lacy ; the first a Bohemian, the second of Scottish, and the third of Irish extraction. The empress, influenced equally by her tenderness and her prudence, would never allow her husband to take the field. Francis was personally brave, even to excess, but he had not the talents of a great commander, and his wife would

* It is perhaps worth while to remark, that a large portion of our National Debt was incurred during these wars, first by the enormous subsidies granted to Maria Theresa in the beginning of her reign, to defend her against Frederic of Prussia ; and then by the more enormous sums granted to Frederic to defend him against Maria Theresa.

neither risk his safety, nor hazard the fate of her dominions, by entrusting her armies to his guidance.

In this war Maria Theresa recovered, and again lost, Silesia : at one time she was nearly overwhelmed, and on the point of being driven from her capital ; again the tide of war rolled back, and her troops drove Frederic from Berlin.

When Marshal Daun gained the victory of Kolin (June 18, 1757), by which the Austrian dominions were preserved from the most imminent danger, the empress-queen instituted the order of Maria Theresa, with which she decorated her victorious general and his principal officers. She loaded Daun with honours, and distributed rewards and gratuities to all the soldiers who had been present ; medals were struck, *Te Deums* were sung ;—in short, she triumphed gratefully and gloriously. When, a few years afterwards, the same Marshal Daun lost a decisive battle,* after bravely contesting it, Maria Theresa received him with greater honours than after his former successes : she even went out from her capital to meet him on his return, an honour never before conferred on any subject, and by the most flattering expressions of kindness and confidence she raised his spirits and reconciled him with himself : and this was in reality a most glorious triumph. The Roman senators, when they voted thanks to Varro after his defeat, “because he had not despaired of the fate of Rome,” displayed not more magnanimity than did this generous woman, acting merely from the impulse of her own feminine nature.

When Frederic of Prussia captured any of the Austrian officers, he treated them with coldness, rigour, and sometimes insult : Maria Theresa never retaliated. When the Prince de Bevern was taken prisoner in Silesia, Frederic, like a mere heartless despot as he was, declined either to ransom or exchange him. He did not even deign to answer the prince's letters. The prince applied to Maria Theresa for permission to ransom himself, and she gave him his liberty at once, without ransom and without condition. These are things which never should be forgotten in estimating the character of Maria Theresa. Heaven had been so bountiful to her in mind and heart, that the possession of power could never entirely corrupt

* The battle of Torgau.

either : still, and ever, she was the benevolent and high-souled woman.

Next to France, her chief ally in this war was the Empress Elizabeth of Russia, whose motives of enmity against Frederic were, like those of Maria Theresa, of a personal nature. Frederic had indulged in some severe jests at the expense of that weak and vicious woman ; she retorted with an army of 50,000 men. It appears a just retribution that this man, who disdained or derided all female society, who neglected and ill-treated his wife, and tyrannized over his sisters,* should have been nearly destroyed through the influence of the sex he despised. Of all his enemies, the two empresses were the most powerful, dangerous, and implacable. In seven terrible and sanguinary campaigns did Frederic make head against the confederated powers ; but the struggle was too unequal. In 1762, Maria Theresa appeared everywhere triumphant ; all her most sanguine hopes were on the point of being realized, and another campaign must have seen her detested adversary ruined or at her feet : such was the despondency of Frederic at this time, that he carried poison about him, firmly resolved that he would not be led a captive to Vienna. He was saved by one of those unforeseen events by which Providence so often confounds and defeats all the calculations of men. The Empress Elizabeth died, and was succeeded by Peter III., who entertained the most extravagant admiration for Frederic. Russia, from being a formidable enemy, became suddenly an ally. The face of things changed at once ; the rival powers were again balanced, and the decision of this terrible game of ambition appeared as far off as ever.

But all parties were by this time wearied and exhausted ; all wished for peace, and none would stoop to ask it. At length one of Maria Theresa's officers, who had been wounded and taken prisoner, ventured to hint to Frederic that his imperial mistress was not unwilling to come to terms ; this conversation took place at the castle of Hubertsberg.† The king snatching up half a sheet of paper, wrote down in few words the conditions

* For one instance of his detestable tyranny, see the story of poor Princess Amelia, in Thiebault.

† Thiebault, *Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin*.

on which he was willing to make peace. The whole was contained in about ten lines. He sent this off to Vienna by a courier, demanding a definite answer *within twelve days!* The Austrian ministers were absolutely out of breath at the idea ; they wished to temporize, to delay. But Maria Theresa, with the promptitude of her character, decided at once : she accepted the terms, and the peace of Hubertsberg was concluded in 1763. By this treaty all places and prisoners were given up,—not a foot of territory was gained or lost by either party. Silesia continued in the possession of Prussia. The political affairs of Germany remained in precisely the same state as before the war ; but Saxony and Bohemia had been desolated, Prussia almost depopulated, and more than 500,000 men had fallen in battle.

France, to whom the Austrian alliance seems destined to be ever fatal, lost in this war the flower of her armies, half the coined money of the kingdom, almost all her possessions in America and in the East and West Indies, her marine, her commerce, and her credit ;* and those disorders were fomented, those disasters precipitated, which at length produced the Revolution, and brought the daughter of Maria Theresa to the scaffold.

Immediately after the peace of Hubertsberg, the Archduke Joseph was elected King of the Romans, which ensured him the imperial title after the death of his father.

At the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, Maria Theresa was in the forty-eighth year of her age. During the twenty-four years of her public life, the eyes of all Europe had been fixed upon her—in hope, in fear, in admiration. She had contrived to avert from her own states the worst of those evils she had brought on others. Her subjects beheld her with a love and reverence little short of idolatry. In the midst of her weaknesses she had displayed many virtues ; and if she had committed great errors, she had also performed great and good actions. But besides being an empress and a queen, Maria Theresa was also a wife and a mother ; and while she was guiding the reins of a mighty government, we are tempted to ask where was her husband, and where were her children?

Maria Theresa's attachment to her husband had been fond

* *Vide* Siècle de Louis XV.

and passionate in her youth, and it was not only constant to death, but survived even in the grave. Francis was her inferior in abilities ; his influence was not felt, like hers, to the extremity of the empire, but no man could be more generally beloved in his court and family. His children idolized him, and he was to them a fond and indulgent father. His temper was gay, volatile, and unambitious ; his manners and person captivating. Although his education had been neglected, he had travelled much, had seen much, and, being naturally quick, social, and intelligent, he had gained some information on most subjects. In Italy he had imbibed a taste for the fine arts ; he cultivated natural history, and particularly chemistry. While his wife was making peace and war, and ruling the destinies of nations, he amused himself among his retorts and crucibles, in buying pictures, or in superintending a ballet or an opera.

Francis expended immense sums in the study of alchemy ;* he also believed that it was possible, by fusion, to convert several small diamonds into a large one ; for it was not then known that the diamond was a combustible substance. His attempts in this way cost him large sums. He was fond of amassing money, apparently not so much from avarice as from an idea that wealth would give him a kind of power, independent of his consort ; many instances are related of his humanity and beneficence, and his private charities are said to have been immense.

During the life of Francis, Vienna was a gay and magnificent capital. There was a fine opera, for which Gluck and Hasse composed the music, and Noverre superintended the ballet. He was fond of masques, balls, and fêtes, and long after the empress

* We find that during the reign of Maria Theresa the pursuit of the philosopher's stone was not only the fashion at Vienna, but was encouraged by the Government ; a belief in the doctrines of magic and in familiar spirits was also general, even among persons of rank ; princes, ministers, and distinguished military commanders were not exempt from this puerile superstition.

"Professor Jaquin," says Wraxall, writing from Vienna, "is empowered by the empress to receive proposals from such as are inclined to enter on the attempt to make gold ; in other words, to find the philosopher's stone. They are immediately provided by him with a room, charcoal, utensils, crucibles, and every requisite at her Imperial Majesty's expense."

had ceased to take a pleasure in these amusements, she entered into them for her husband's sake. All accounts agree that they lived together in the most cordial union; that Maria Theresa was an example of every wife-like virtue—except submission; and Francis a model of every conjugal virtue—except fidelity. Such exceptions might have been supposed fatal to all domestic peace, but this imperial couple seem to present a singular proof to the contrary.

Francis submitted without a struggle to the ascendancy of his wife; he ever affected to make a display of his own insignificance, as compared with her grandeur and power. Many instances are related of the extreme simplicity of his manners. Being once at the levee, when the empress-queen was giving audience to her subjects, he retired from the circle, and seated himself in a distant corner of the apartment, near two ladies of the court. On their attempting to rise, he said, "Do not mind me, I shall stay here till the court is gone, and then amuse myself with looking at the crowd." One of the ladies, the Countess Harrach, replied, "As long as your Imperial Majesty is present, the *court* will be here." "You mistake," replied Francis, "the empress and my children are the court; I am here but as a simple individual." *

Though his deportment towards the empress was uniformly tender and respectful, Francis too often allowed his admiration, and even his affections, to stray from his legitimate sovereign; and it is said that in the first years of her marriage Maria Theresa was exceedingly jealous of her husband, and took care that her maids of honour should not be distinguished by their personal attractions: this jealousy, however, did not lead her into any petty acts of spite or tyranny. Francis, during the last few years of life, was particularly attached to a very beautiful woman of the court, the Princess of Auersberg. He lavished on her immense sums in money and jewels, and his attentions to her, if they were not public, were at least no secret. The empress alone, with admirable self-command, would neither see, hear, nor comprehend what she could not resent without compromising her feminine and queenly dignity. The very power she possessed to mortify and disgrace her rival

* Cox's Memoirs.

seemed to this really generous woman a reason for not exerting it: she would neither wound her husband's feelings, nor degrade herself by publicly slighting the object of his admiration. When the Princess of Auersberg appeared at court on state occasions, she was always received by the empress with the distinction due to her rank, and with a studied but undeviating politeness. Not the most prying courtier, nor confidential lady of honour, could have detected in the deportment of the empress either the jealous woman or the irritated sovereign.

In the summer of 1765, the imperial court left Vienna for Inspruck, in order to be present at the marriage of the Archduke Leopold with the Infanta of Spain. The emperor had previously complained of indisposition, and seemed overcome by those melancholy presentiments which are often the result of a deranged system, and only remembered when they happen to be realized. He was particularly fond of his youngest daughter, Marie Antoinette, and after taking leave of his children he ordered her to be brought to him once more: he took her in his arms, kissed and pressed her to his heart, saying with emotion, "*J'avais besoin d'embrasser encore cette enfant!*" While at Inspruck he was much indisposed, and Maria Theresa, who watched him with solicitude, appeared miserable and anxious; she requested that he would be bled; he replied with a petulance very unusual to him, "*Madame, voulez-vous que je meurs dans la saignée?*" The heavy air of the valleys seemed to oppress him even to suffocation, and he was often heard to exclaim, "*Ah, si je pouvois seulement sortir de ces montagnes du Tyrol!*" On Sunday, August 18th, the empress and his sister again entreated him to be bled; he replied, "*I must go to the opera, and I am engaged afterwards to sup with Joseph,* and cannot disappoint him: but I will be bled to-morrow.*" The same evening, on leaving the theatre, he fell down in an apoplectic fit, and expired in the arms of his son.

A scene of horror and confusion immediately ensued. While her family and attendants surrounded the empress, and the officers of the palace were running different ways in consternation, the body of Francis lay abandoned on a little wretched pallet in one of the ante-rooms—the blood oozing from the

* Wraxall says he was engaged to sup with the Princess of Auersberg.

orifices in his temples, and not even a valet near to watch over him !

The anguish of Maria Theresa was heightened by her religious feelings, and the idea that her husband had been taken away in the midst of his pleasures, and before he had time to make his peace with God, seemed to press fearfully upon her mind. It was found necessary to remove her instantly ; she was placed in a barge hastily fitted up, and, accompanied only by her son, her master of horse, and a single lady-in-waiting, she proceeded down the river to Vienna.

Previous to her departure, a courier was despatched to the three archduchesses, who had been left behind in the capital, bearing a letter, which the empress had dictated to her daughters on the day after her husband's death : it was in these words :—

“Alas ! my dear daughters, I am unable to comfort you ! Our calamity is at its height ; you have lost a most incomparable father, and I a consort, a friend—my heart's joy for forty-two years past ! Having been brought up together, our hearts and our sentiments were united in the same views. All the misfortunes I have suffered during the last twenty-five years were softened by his support. I am suffering such deep affliction, that nothing but true piety, and you, my dear children, can make me tolerate a life, which, during its continuance, shall be spent in acts of devotion. Pray for our good and worthy lord.* I give you my blessing, and will ever be your good mother,

“MARIA THERESA.”

The remains of Francis I. were carried to Vienna ; and after lying in state, were deposited in the family vault under the church of the Capuchins, built in the year 1743. When Maria Theresa was only six-and-twenty, and in the full bloom of youth and health, she had constructed in this vault a monument for herself and her husband. Hither, during the remainder of her life, she repaired, on the 18th of every month, and poured forth her devotions at his tomb. Her grief had the same fixed character with all her other feelings ; she wore mourning to the day of her death : she never afterwards inhabited the

* The Emperor Joseph.

state apartments in which she had formerly lived with her husband, but removed to a suite of rooms plainly, and even poorly furnished, and hung with black cloth. There was no affectation in this excess of sorrow ; her conduct was uniform during sixteen years ; though she held her court, and attended to the affairs of the government as usual, she was never known to enter into amusements or to relax from the mournful austerity of her widowed state, except on public occasions, when her presence was absolutely necessary.

After the death of Francis, it was found that on the very day preceding his decease he had given to the Princess of Auersberg an order on the royal treasury for 200,000 florins. When it was presented for payment, the council were of opinion that a donation for so large a sum ought not, under all the circumstances, to be fulfilled. But Maria Theresa would not allow her husband's wishes to be disputed ; with her native magnanimity of temper, she interfered, and ordered the money to be paid immediately. It is said that she would have continued her countenance towards the princess, but for an instance of unfeeling levity on the part of this woman which is almost inconceivable. At the first court which the empress held after her widowhood, the ladies were ordered to appear in mourning and without rouge. The Princess of Auersberg appeared among the rest ; her dress was the most rich and elegant that was compatible with etiquette, and, in defiance of the prohibition, she wore a profusion of rouge. When she approached the empress, to kiss her hand, Maria Theresa, overcome by a variety of emotions, shrunk back from her, and withdrew her hand with a look of disgust and resentment. From this time the princess never appeared again at court ; but Maria Theresa would not give to the people round her an excuse for treating with insult a woman who had been dear to her husband ; she still extended her protection to her, and on many occasions showed a generous regard for her interests and welfare.

Maria Theresa was the mother of sixteen children, all born within twenty years. There is every reason to suppose that her naturally warm affections, and her strong sense, would have rendered her, in a private station, an admirable, an exemplary parent ; and it was not her fault, but rather her misfortune,

that she was placed in a situation where the most sacred duties and feelings of her sex became merely secondary. Though the idea was industriously disseminated through Europe that Maria Theresa presided herself over the education of her children, it is not, and it could not be true. While her numerous family were in their infancy, the empress was constantly and exclusively occupied in the public duties and cares of her high station; the affairs of government demanded almost every moment of her time. The court physician, Von Swieten, waited on her each morning at her levee, and brought her a minute report of the health of the princes and princesses. If one of them were indisposed, the mother, laying aside all other cares, immediately flew to their apartment; otherwise she was often a week together without being able to see them. Their early education was entrusted entirely to the governors and the *grandes maitresses*,* and seems to have been as narrow and superficial as that of the empress herself.

Among the professors and teachers employed in the imperial family, the only one who really did his duty towards his pupils was Metastasio. They all spoke and wrote Italian with elegance and facility.† Maria Theresa herself had by no means a cultivated mind, and was unable to detect the ignorance and incapacity of the governors and governesses in respect to literature; but wherever she could use her own judgment, and her own eyes, her orders and wishes were literally fulfilled. Thus all her children were brought up with extreme simplicity. They were not allowed to indulge in personal pride or caprice; their benevolent feelings were cultivated both by precept and example. They were sedulously instructed in the "Lives of

* Marie Antoinette once caused the dismissal of one of the governesses, by confessing that all the letters and copies which had been shown to her mother as proofs of her progress, had been previously traced with a pencil. (*Vide* Madame Campan.)

† *Vide* Madame Campan's Memoirs of Marie Antoinette. Before the reign of Maria Theresa, and even until some years after her accession, French was not spoken at Vienna. Italian was the language of the court; and the Spanish costume was the court dress. The alliance with France introduced the language and fashions of that country, which since that time have prevailed in the German courts.

the Saints," and all the tedious forms of unmeaning devotion in which, according to the mistaken but sincere conviction of their mother, all true piety consisted. A high sense of family pride, an unbounded devotion to the House of Austria, and to their mother the empress, as the head of that house, was early impressed upon their minds, and became a ruling passion, as well as a principle of conduct, with all of them.

We have only to glance back upon the history of the last fifty years, to see the result of this mode of education. We find that the children of Maria Theresa, transplanted into different countries of Europe, carried with them their national and family prejudices; that some of them, in later years, supplied the defects of their early education, and became remarkable for talent and for virtue; that all of them, even those who were least distinguished and estimable, displayed, occasionally, both goodness of heart and elevation of character; and that their filial devotion to their mother, and what they considered her interests, was carried to an excess which, in one or two instances, proved fatal to themselves.*

Her eldest son Joseph succeeded his father as Emperor of Germany: he was born in 1741, and till the age of twelve he was confined to the daily task of reading the legends of the saints, and other superstitious fables. He gave no indication at this time of the active mind and uncommon abilities which he afterwards displayed; and all the qualities of a really fine understanding were concealed under an appearance of sullenness and timidity, amounting to apathy; this reserve was increased by the extreme partiality of the empress for a younger son, the Archduke Charles, a youth of the most brilliant talents, bold address, and almost untractable passions. If Maria Theresa had given more time and attention to the education of her children, she would not, in all probability, have so completely mistaken the character of her eldest son, as to suppose him destitute equally of heart and intellect. She was often heard to express her regret that "Heaven had appointed him

* *Vide* the Life of Marie Antoinette, and Orloff's *Mémoires sur Naples*, v. II. "La gloire et la prospérité de la maison d'Autriche est comme une passion enracinée dans le cœur de tous les enfans de Marie Thérèse." (Georgel.)

as her successor, and excluded from her throne a youth adorned with every quality requisite for governing mankind." The two brothers lived on ill terms, fomented by the unjust predilection of the parents. The consequence of these family disputes might have been as fatal to the peace of the empire as it was painful to the empress, if her favourite son had not been in mercy removed. He died in 1761, at the age of sixteen, at the very period when Maria Theresa was glorying in the success of her arms, and anticipating the ruin of her enemies : it was a deep, a terrible trial to the mother's heart. As she sat on the bed of her dying son, dissolved in tears, the young prince, taking her hand fondly in his, said, with a last effort, "Mother, do not weep for my death, for, had I lived, I should have given you far greater cause of sorrow :" soon afterwards he expired.

Upon the death of Charles, the real character of Joseph began slowly to develop itself ; his mother, who had often regretted his hard inflexible temper, had once said to an artist, "I wish to teach my son to love the arts, if possible ; it might soften his disposition ; *for he has a hard heart!*" She did not quite succeed in softening his disposition, but while she lived she could counteract the ill effect of many of his faults, and long before her death his really great qualities obtained an interest in her affections, and a strong influence over her mind.

Joseph was married in his twentieth year to Elizabeth, princess of Parma, whose story, in itself so romantic, has formed the groundwork of a romance.* She was an Italian, or rather a Spanish beauty, with a clear olive complexion, splendid dark eyes, and a charming figure. She possessed many talents and a cultivated mind, but her countenance was clouded by an expression of cold hauteur and melancholy, which defeated all her attractions. Her husband, who became ardently attached to her, could never succeed in winning her affection, nor dissipate the gloom which hung upon her spirits. From the moment of her arrival at Vienna, she was constantly heard to declare that her life would be of short duration. It

* By Mrs. Charles Gore, who has told her story very beautifully, and with few deviations from historic truth, in her "Hungarian Tales."

was supposed that she had left behind her in Italy a lover whom she preferred, but the truth was never known. The forebodings of a disappointed heart, or a distempered imagination, were in this instance realized, and she died of the small-pox about two years after her marriage.

Joseph had not recovered his grief for her loss, when the importunities of his father and mother induced him to consent to a second marriage, which reasons of state rendered advisable. He was united to the Princess of Bavaria, the daughter of his mother's adversary, Charles VII. She was plain in person, and unformed in mind; in every respect a most disagreeable contrast to his former beautiful and interesting wife; and from the first moment he treated her with neglect. The poor princess, unfortunately for herself, had deep and warm affections; she loved her husband, and being but too conscious of her own defects and his aversion, she could scarcely meet him without the most painful emotion. When he addressed her she would turn pale, tremble, stammer, and sometimes burst into tears. This want of self-possession only increased his dislike. Maria Theresa treated her daughter-in-law with coldness, and could not overcome her prejudice against the child of an inveterate enemy. Her family followed her example, and the situation of this unhappy woman, in a court where she was a stranger, and where all looked upon her with contempt or aversion, was really pitiable. The Emperor Francis alone treated her with some kindness, and, on hearing of his sudden death, she exclaimed with a burst of tears, "Ah, malheureuse! j'ai perdu mon seul appui!" The rest of her short life was a series of miseries and mortifications. After a union of little more than two years she also sickened of the small-pox, and died in May 1767. Joseph never could be persuaded to enter into a third marriage. It is said that he had become attached to the eldest daughter of his governor Prince Batthiani, afterwards Countess Windischgratz, and also to her sister, Countess Esterhazy; but it was a species of attachment which did not compromise the discretion of either of those ladies. The rest of the history of Joseph belongs to a period subsequent to the death of his mother.

Leopold, the second surviving son of the empress, became, on the death of his father, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and governed that state for twenty-five years before he succeeded to the empire in 1790. He was a man of great capacity and original strength of mind, and introduced into the civil and religious establishments of Tuscany those reforms which have rendered it one of the most free and flourishing of the states of Italy.*

Ferdinand, her third son, married the daughter and heiress of Hercules Rinaldo, duke of Modena (the last descendant of the Italian house of Este), and, in right of his wife, became Duke of Modena. He was a man of a mild and beneficent character.

Maximilian, the youngest son of Maria Theresa, became Elector of Cologne.

All the daughters of Maria Theresa were interesting or remarkable women; and all, except the eldest (Marianna), who was a little deformed, inherited more or less of their mother's personal beauty. The Archduchess Marianna and the Archduchess Elizabeth lived and died unmarried. They resided in the imperial palace, in constant attendance on their mother, and, we are told, "spent their lives more like nuns than princesses." Most of their time was devoted to study, to devotion, and acts of charity.

The Archduchess Christina was the mother's favourite, and deserved to be so; she was a very extraordinary woman, and by her talents for political intrigue, and her power over her mother and her married sisters, the Queens of France and Naples, exercised at one time no slight influence in the affairs of Europe. She resembled the empress in person and character, but excelled her in mental accomplishments. She was very beautiful and dignified, had a taste for literature, and was fond of painting. Her father had designed her to marry the Duke de Chablais, brother of the King of Sardinia, but the archduchess had already fixed her affections on Prince Albert of Saxony; and, with the same pertinacity of feeling and determination of purpose which had distinguished her mother on a similar occasion, she was resolved to have the

* Forsyth's Italy.

man she had chosen, and no other. Maria Theresa, divided between the wishes of her husband and those of her daughter, was for some time rendered exceedingly unhappy, and there were painful divisions in the imperial family, which are said to have hastened the treaty of Hubertsberg. Thus the wilfulness of a young princess in an "*affaire du cœur*" contributed to the pacification of Europe. The sudden death of the emperor removed the principal obstacle to her marriage. She obtained her mother's consent, and was united to Prince Albert in 1766. Though she and her husband were appointed joint governors of Hungary, and afterwards of the Netherlands, she resided chiefly at Vienna: the partial fondness of the empress for this favourite daughter increased with her declining years, and she could scarcely dispense with her society.

The Archduchess Amelia was also distinguished among her sisters for talent and personal beauty. On the theatre attached to the palace at Schönbrunn, the younger members of the imperial family were accustomed to perform the dramas which Metastasio wrote expressly for them, under the direction of the poet himself. Such actors and actresses were not likely to be severely criticised; but it appears that the Archduchess Amelia generally excelled in these performances, and Metastasio speaks with poetical rapture of her "*enchanting voice*" and her "*angelic figure*." She married Don Ferdinand, duke of Parma; and conducted herself after her marriage with so much levity and indiscretion as to incur the deep displeasure of her mother.

The Archduchess Joanna, who had been affianced at twelve years old to Ferdinand, king of Naples, soon afterwards died of the small-pox; and the next sister, Josepha, was destined to supply her place: her melancholy story is, I believe, well known, but so peculiarly illustrates her mother's character and views that it ought not to be omitted here.

The Archduchess Josepha was, at the age of fifteen, a most beautiful and captivating girl, as lively and innocent as she was lovely, with the tall slight figure, transparent complexion, and long fair hair which distinguished the daughters of the House of Austria; her manners were extremely engaging.

and the sweetness and benevolence of her disposition rendered her the favourite of the court. She was publicly betrothed to the King of Naples in September 1767, assumed the title of queen, and was treated with all the etiquette due to a crowned head ; but, far from considering her exaltation with pleasure, she seemed to regard it with a species of horror, and wept incessantly over her approaching separation from her family. While she was suffering under extreme nervous agitation, her mother desired her to visit the family vault under the church of the Capuchins, and perform her devotions for the last time at the tomb of her father. The young queen expressed the utmost repugnance and horror at the idea, and begged to be spared this proof of her filial love. The empress, unused to the slightest resistance on the part of her children, would not allow her authority to be disputed, and reiterated her commands with some severity. Josepha submitted, and retiring to her own apartment burst into tears : she took her little sister Marie Antoinette in her arms, and told her plaintively that she was about to leave her, never to return. She then descended into the fatal vault, in obedience to her mother's commands. While there she was seized with a cold shivering, and nearly fainted away ; on being brought back to the palace she sickened the same evening ; the next day the small-pox declared itself, and in a few days she was no more. Her mother was overwhelmed with affliction, heightened by all the agony of self-reproach. She had nearly abandoned the idea of allowing any of her daughters to ascend the throne of Naples ; but, after some hesitation, she yielded to the representations of Prince Kaunitz, and the next daughter, Caroline, supplied the place vacated by the death of her two elder sisters : she was only fourteen. Her young imagination was strongly excited by the death of her sisters : she evinced the utmost abhorrence for an alliance which seemed destined to be fatal to her family, and it required all her mother's authority, and the arguments of Prince Kaunitz, to vanquish her reluctance. The alluring descriptions of the climate and luxury of Naples, and of the grandeur and homage which awaited her, at length prevailed over her fears, and she was married to Ferdinand in 1768. Caroline had talent as well

as beauty; she soon contrived to govern her stupid, good-humoured husband, and under the guidance of her favourite Acton, and the notorious Lady Hamilton, ruled Naples almost absolutely for many years, and precipitated those revolutions in which she has obtained an infamous celebrity.*

The unhappy Marie Antoinette was the youngest daughter of Maria Theresä. She was married to the Dauphin, afterwards Louis XVI., in 1770: thus was sealed the alliance between Austria and France; and Maria Theresa, who had been engaged for years in accomplishing this great object of her wishes, exulted in the success of her policy. In placing a daughter of her family on the throne of France, she believed that she was securing the predominant influence of Austria in the French cabinet, and that she was rendering, by this grand scheme of policy, the ancient and hereditary rival of her empire subservient to the future aggrandizement of her house. Far different was the result! but Heaven, in mercy or in anger, veiled the future from her eyes. Could she have beheld the daughter whom she had unconsciously sacrificed, dragged to the scaffold, amid the insults of a populace drunk with blood and fury, and a French conqueror dictating terms of peace in her capital—ay, in her very palace†—she, even she who bore with such affecting resignation the loss of the husband of her youth, and encountered with heroism the shock of adverse fortune, would perhaps have torn the grey hairs from her head, and died despairing.

It will be seen from this little sketch of Maria Theresa's family, how often, amid her political triumphs and intrigues, her heart must have bled over her domestic distresses: how often her public cares must have mingled with and embittered her private sorrows; but constant, engrossing occupation averted many griefs, and a deep sense of religion enabled her to bear others.

It is very amusing to contrast the routine of her private life with that of the heartless, ostentatious Elizabeth, and the dissolute, splendid Catherine. Maria Theresa lived in the

* Forsyth's Italy. Clarke's Travels. *Mémoires sur Naples*.

† At Schönbrunn, Napoleon dictated the Peace of Vienna, in 1809.

interior of her palace with great simplicity. In the morning, an old man, who could hardly be entitled a *chamberlain*, but merely what is called on the Continent a *frotteur*, entered her sleeping-room about five or six in the morning, opened the shutters, lighted the stove, and arranged the apartment.* She breakfasted on a cup of milk-coffee; then dressed and heard mass. The floor of her room was so contrived, that it opened by a sliding *parquet*, and mass was celebrated in the chapel beneath; thus she assisted at the ceremony without being seen, and with as little trouble and loss of time as possible. She then proceeded to business: every Tuesday she received the ministers of the different departments; other days were set apart for giving audience to foreigners and strangers, who, according to the etiquette of the imperial court, were always presented singly, and received in the private apartments. There were stated days on which the poorest and meanest of her subjects were admitted, almost indiscriminately; and so entire was her confidence in their attachment and her own popularity, that they might whisper to her, or see her alone if they required it. At other times she read memorials, or dictated letters and despatches, signed papers, &c. At noon her dinner was brought in, consisting of a few dishes, served with simplicity: she usually dined alone, like Napoleon; and for the same reason—to economise time. After dinner she was engaged in public business till six; after that hour her daughters were admitted to join in her evening prayer: if they absented themselves, she sent to know if they were indisposed; if not, they were certain of meeting with a maternal reprimand on the following day. At half-past eight or nine she retired to rest. When she held a drawing-room or an evening circle, she remained till ten or eleven, and sometimes played at cards. Before the death of her husband she was often present at the masked balls, or *ridottos*, which were given at court during the Carnival; afterwards these entertainments and the number of fêtes, or gala-days, were gradually diminished in number. During the last

* For a very curious account of this old *frotteur*, and of the manner in which he was instrumental in the liberation of Baron Trenck, see Trenck's Memoirs, and Thiebault's "Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin."

years of her life, when she became very infirm, the nobility and foreign ministers generally assembled at the houses of Prince Kaunitz and Prince Collerado.

On the first day of the year, and on her birthday, Maria Theresa held a public court, at which all the nobility, and civil and military officers, who did not obtain access at other times, crowded to kiss her hand. She continued this custom as long as she could support herself in a chair.

Great part of the summer and autumn were spent at Schönbrunn, or at Lachsenburg. In the gardens of the former palace there was a little shaded alley, communicating with her apartments. Here, in the summer days, she was accustomed to walk up and down, or sit for hours together: a box was buckled round her waist, filled with papers and memorials, which she read carefully, noting with her pencil the necessary answers or observations to each.

It was the fault, or rather the mistake of Maria Theresa, to give up too much of her time to the petty details of business; in her government, as in her religion, she sometimes mistook the form for the spirit, and her personal superintendence became at length more like the vigilance of an inspector-general than the enlightened jurisdiction of a sovereign. She could not, however, be accused of selfishness or vanity in this respect, for her indefatigable attention to business was without parade, and to these duties she sacrificed her pleasures, her repose, and often her health.

Much of her time was employed in devotion; the eighteenth day of every month was consecrated to the memory of her husband;* and the whole month of August was usually spent in retirement, in penance, and in celebrating masses and requiems for the repose of his soul. Those who are "too proud to worship, and too wise to feel," may smile at this; but others, even those who do not believe in the efficacy of requiems and masses, will respect the source from which her sorrow flowed, and the power whence it sought for comfort. Her superstition has been called, in ridicule, "a womanish superstition;"—it was so in every sense of the word; for it was a superstition, compounded of the strength of love and the consciousness of

* Francis died on the 18th of August.

weakness: but why it should be made a reproach to her memory, or a subject of mockery, I do not understand. Maria Theresa believed as she had been taught to believe, and walked in the light which had been vouchsafed to her. It is computed that she devoted five hours out of fifteen to her religious duties, and this is related as a thing incredible, and as more becoming a "bigoted abbess than a great sovereign;" but was it too much, that, when declining in years, after having proved in her own person the nothingness of all earthly grandeur, she should give up one-third of her time to prepare for that better world to which she was fast approaching? Alfred in the prime of life did the same; and with regard to the puerile and minute observances, the credulity and intolerance which were mingled with her religious feelings, we must remember the system of faith in which she had been educated: the same turn of mind which sent Maria Theresa on a pilgrimage to "our Lady of Heren-haltz,"* or to pray and tell her beads at the sepulchre of her husband, would, in a Protestant country, have made her half a saint, or at least *evangelical*.

Her benevolence of heart is well known. Our books of history, and collections of anecdotes, are full of stories of her beneficence. She could scarcely endure the sight of suffering in another. Once, as she was driving along the streets of Vienna, she saw a poor woman with two children, feebly dragging themselves along, and apparently in a state of starvation: the idea that such destitution and misery should exist under her government appeared to strike her with the deepest anguish and humiliation. "What have I done," she exclaimed, "that Providence should afflict my eyes with such a sight as this!" It need hardly be added, that the poor woman and her family had reason to bless the hour in which they attracted the notice of the kind-hearted empress. It is said that her annual donations and private charities amounted to more than eighty thousand a year; and her bounties towards all who served her were such, that her son sometimes expostulated. "They

* There was also a certain Virgin in one of the churches of Vienna, to whom were attributed the powers of the ancient Lucina; to her Maria Theresa went daily to pay her devotions, previous to the first confinement of her daughter Marie Antoinette.

accuse me of not being generous," said he, "but if I gave like my mother, we should soon have nothing left to give away."

Her people, who idolized her, knew her weaknesses, and occasionally suffered from them; but they averted their eyes in reverence, as from those of a mother; and since in history the word *weakness* is so often applied to the vices and crimes of a Catherine, we ought to find some softer expression to designate the failings of Maria Theresa, which, if they did not absolutely lean to virtue's side, at least sprang from virtuous principles. We are informed that her watchfulness over the manners and morals of her court and capital degenerated into a love of scandal and gossiping.* Far above all suspicion of frailty herself, she made but little allowance for the indiscretions of others, and her inspections into the conduct of the ladies of the court became at length rigorous and vexatious. She employed spies and emissaries to give her information of all that was passing, and is accused of an unwarrantable curiosity in prying into the secrets of families. In no court were the appearances of virtue so carefully kept up as at Vienna during her reign; any woman, of whatever condition, who openly or boldly violated decorum, was sure to receive an order to quit the capital, and was banished to some distant frontier town of Hungary or Bohemia. Yet during her reign and that of her son, Vienna was one of the most profligate capitals in Europe, and retains that character under the dominion of her grandson, the pious, chaste, and moral Francis II.

At the time of her husband's death Maria Theresa was still a fine woman, though her person had become rather large and heavy; but about two years afterwards she was attacked by the small-pox, a disorder most fatal in her family. She recovered with difficulty, and her face was cruelly disfigured. Still her features retained something of their original form and beauty, until it happened that one day, while travelling from Vienna to Presburg, she was overturned and thrown from her open berline. She fell on her face, which was so much injured and lacerated that she nearly lost the use of

* L'Abbé Georgel; Coxe; Wraxall.

her eyes. After this accident no one could have recognised in her scarred complexion and altered features the least trace of that beauty which had once made the swords of a thousand warriors leap from their scabbards.

We must now resume the thread of political events from the conclusion of the Seven Years' War to the end of Maria Theresa's long and eventful reign.

After the death of her husband she admitted her son, the Emperor Joseph, to the co-regency, or joint government of all her hereditary dominions without prejudice to her own supreme jurisdiction. They had one court, and their names were united in all their edicts ; but what were the exact limits of their respective prerogatives none could tell. The mother and son occasionally differed in opinion ; he sometimes influenced her against her better judgment and principles ; but during her life she held in some constraint the restless, ambitious, and despotic spirit of the young emperor. The good terms on which they lived together, her tenderness for him, and his dutiful reverence towards her, place the maternal character of Maria Theresa in a very respectable point of view. Prince Kaunitz had the chief direction of foreign affairs, and, although the empress placed unbounded confidence in his integrity and abilities, and indulged him in all his peculiarities and absurdities, he was a minister, and not a favourite. He never stood between her and her people, nor was his power like that which Leicester exercised over Elizabeth, Biren over the Empress Anne, or Potemkin over Catherine II. He could influence, but he never governed her.

From the year 1763 to 1778 there was an interval of profound peace. I extract from the "Memoirs of the House of Austria" the following account of the civil government of Maria Theresa during the last sixteen years of her reign, because it could neither be more briefly nor more elegantly expressed :—

"She founded or enlarged in different parts of her extensive dominions several academies for the improvement of the arts and sciences, instituted numerous seminaries for the education of all ranks of people, reformed the public schools, and ordered prizes to be distributed among the students who made the

greatest progress in learning, or were distinguished for propriety of behaviour or purity of morals. She established prizes for those who excelled in different branches of manufacture, in geometry, mining, smelting metals, and even spinning. She particularly turned her attention to the promotion of agriculture, which, in a medal struck by her order, was entitled the 'Art which nourishes all other Arts,'* and founded a society of agriculture at Milan, with bounties to the peasants who obtained the best crops. She confined the rights of the chase, often so pernicious to the husbandman, within narrow limits, and issued a decree enjoining all the nobles who kept wild game to maintain their fences in good repair, permitting the peasants to destroy the wild boars that ravaged the fields. She also abolished the scandalous power usurped by the landholders of limiting the season for mowing the grass within the forests and their precincts, and mitigated the feudal servitude of the peasants in Bohemia.

"Among her beneficial regulations must not be omitted the introduction of inoculation, and the establishment of a small-pox hospital. On the recovery of her children from a disorder so fatal to her own family, Maria Theresa gave an entertainment, which displayed the benevolence of her character. Sixty-five children, who had been previously inoculated at the hospital, were regaled with a dinner in the gallery of the palace at Schoenbrunn, in the midst of a numerous court; and Maria Theresa herself, assisted by her offspring, waited on this delightful group, and gave to each of them a piece of money. The parents of the children were treated in another apartment; the whole party was admitted to the performance of a German play, and this charming entertainment was concluded with a dance, which was protracted till midnight.†

"Perhaps the greatest effort made by the empress-queen, and which reflects the highest honour on her memory, was the reformation of various abuses in the Church, and the regulations which she introduced in the monasteries.

"She took away the pernicious right which the convents and churches enjoyed of affording an asylum to all criminals with-

* "*Arti artium nutrici.*"

† *Histoire de Marie Thérèse*, pp. 218, 219.

out distinction ; she suppressed the inquisition, which, though curbed by the civil power, still subsisted at Milan. She suppressed the society of Jesuits, although her own confessor was a member of that order, but did not imitate the unjust and cruel measures adopted in Spain and Portugal, and softened the rigour of their lot by every alleviation which circumstances would permit."

To these particulars may be added, from other sources of information,* that Maria Theresa was the first sovereign who threw open the royal domain of the Prater to the use of the public. This was one of the most popular acts of her reign. She prevailed on Pope Clement XIV. (Ganganelli) to erase from the calendar many of the saints' days and holidays, which had become so numerous as to affect materially the transactions of business and commerce, as well as the morals of the people. It is curious that this should have proved one of the most unpopular of all her edicts, and was enforced with the utmost difficulty : great as was the bigotry of Maria Theresa, that of her loving subjects appears to have far exceeded hers. She also paid particular attention to the purity of her coinage, considering it as a part of the good faith of a sovereign.†

It must, however, be confessed, that all her regulations were not equally praiseworthy and beneficial. For instance, the censorship of the press was rigorous and illiberal, and the prohibition of foreign works, particularly of French and English literature, amounted to a kind of proscription. We are assured that "the far greater number of those books which constitute the libraries of persons distinguished for taste and refinement, not merely in France and England, but even at Rome or Florence, was rigorously condemned, and their entry was attended with no less difficulty than danger." That not only

* "*Vie de Marie Thérèse*;" Georgel; Wraxall.

† On visiting the mint at Milan a few years ago, I found the workmen coining dollars with the head of the empress-queen, and the date 1780. The answer to my inquiries made a strong impression on me even at that time. These dollars were intended for the Levant trade ; the people of the Greek islands, being accustomed to trust in the purity of the coinage bearing the effigy of Maria Theresa, took it in exchange more readily than that of any other potentate.

works of an immoral and a rebellious tendency, but a "sentence reflecting on the Catholic religion, a doubt thrown upon the sanctity of some hermit or monk of the middle ages, any publication wherein superstition was attacked or censured, however slightly, was immediately noticed by the police, and prohibited under the severest penalties."

The impediments thus thrown in the way of knowledge, and the diffusion of literature, in a great degree neutralized the effect of her munificence in other instances. It must be allowed that though the rise of modern German literature, which now holds so high a rank in Europe, dates from the reign of Maria Theresa, it owes nothing to her patronage; not that, like Frederic II., she held it in open contempt, but that her mind was otherwise engaged. Lessing, Klopstock, Kant, and Winkelmann, all lived in her time, but none of them were born her subjects, and they derived no encouragement from her notice and patronage. With regard to those narrow prejudices which made her dread rebellion, heresy, and schism in every page of English or French, it may perhaps be some excuse for Maria Theresa to recollect that her successors, after the lapse of fifty years, are neither more wise nor more liberal.

But the great stain upon the character and reign of Maria Theresa, an event which we cannot approach without pain and reluctance, was the famous dismemberment of Poland in 1772. The detailed history of this transaction occupies volumes; but the manner in which Maria Theresa became implicated, her personal share in the disgrace attached to it, and all that can be adduced in palliation of her conduct, may be related in very few words.

The empress-queen had once declared that though she might make peace with Frederic, no consideration should ever induce her to enter into an alliance in which he was a party: to prevent the increase of his power, and to guard against his encroaching ambition, his open hostility, or his secret enmity, had long been the ruling principle of the cabinet of Vienna. Under the influence of her son, and of the Russian government, and actuated by motives of interest and expediency, Maria Theresa departed from this line of policy, to which she had adhered for thirty years.

The first idea of dismembering and partitioning Poland undoubtedly originated with the court of Prussia.*

The negotiations and arrangements for this purpose were carried on with the profoundest secrecy; and each of the powers concerned was so conscious of the infamy attached to it, and so anxious to cast the largest share of blame upon another, that no event of modern history is involved in more obscurity, or more perplexed by contradictory statements and relations. It is really past the power of a plain understanding to attempt to disentangle this dark web of atrocious policy. From the discovery of some of the original documents within the last few years,† a shade of guilt has been removed from the memory of Maria Theresa; for it appears that the treaty, which originated with Frederic, was settled between Prince Henry of Prussia and Catherine II. in 1769;‡ and it was then agreed that if Austria refused to accede to the measure, Russia and Prussia should sign a separate treaty, league against her, seize upon Poland, and carry the war to her frontiers. Maria Theresa professed to feel great scruples, both religious and political, in participating either in the disgrace or advantages of this transaction, but she was overruled by her son and Kaunitz, and she preferred a share of the booty to a terrible and precarious war. That armies should take the field on a mere point of honour, and potentates “greatly find quarrel in a straw,” is nothing new; but a war undertaken upon a point of honesty, a scruple

* The first person to whom it occurred was Prince Henry of Prussia, the younger brother of Frederic.

† I have been told that they were first brought to light when Napoleon occupied Berlin, in 1806.

‡ According to early accounts, Frederic and Maria Theresa had first arranged the treaty, and afterwards drew in Catherine to accede to it; but the fact was otherwise. I am anxious to remove a part of the odium from Maria Theresa: a stain more or less on the character of Catherine is of little consequence. It appears that Prince Henry of Prussia told Ségur that it was entirely arranged between himself and Catherine; and that when he made the proposal, she replied, “C’est un trait de lumière: et si le roi votre frère adopte ce projet, étant d’accord tous deux, nous n’avons rien à craindre; ou l’Autriche coopérera à ce partage, ou nous saurons sans peine la forcer à le souffrir.” (Ségur, vol. ii. p. 126.)

of conscience, or from a generous sense of the right opposed to the wrong, this certainly would have been unprecedented in history ; and Maria Theresa did not set the example. When once she had acceded to this scandalous treaty, she was determined, with her characteristic prudence, to derive as much advantage from it as possible, and her demands were so unconscionable, and the share she claimed was so exorbitant, that the negotiation had nearly been broken off by her confederates ; at length, a dread of premature exposure, and a fear of the consequent failure, induced her to lower her pretensions, and the treaty for the first partition of Poland was signed at Petersburg on the 3d of August, 1772.

The situation of Poland at this time, divided between a licentious nobility and an enslaved peasantry, torn by faction, desolated by plague and famine, abandoned to every excess of violence, anarchy, and profligacy ; the cool audacity of the imperial swindlers, who first deceived and degraded, then robbed and trampled upon that unhappy country ; the atrocious means by which an atrocious purpose was long prepared, and at length accomplished ; the mixture of duplicity, and cruelty, and bribery ; the utter demoralization of the agents and their victims, of the corrupters and the corrupted ; altogether presents a picture which, when contemplated in all its details, fills the mind with loathing and horror. By the Treaty of Partition, to which a committee of Polish delegates, and the king at their head, were obliged to set their seal, Russia appropriated all the north-eastern part of Poland. Frederic obtained all the district which stretches along the Baltic, called Western Prussia. Maria Theresa seized on a large territory to the south of Poland, including Red Russia, Gallicia, and Lodomeria : the city and palatinate of Cracow, and the celebrated salt mines of Vilitzka, were included in her division.

In reference to Maria Theresa's share in the spoliation of Poland, I cannot forbear to mention one circumstance, and will leave it without a comment. She was particularly indignant against the early aggression of Frederic, as not only unjust and treacherous, but *ungrateful*, since it was owing to the interference of her father, Charles VI., that Frederic had not lost his life, either in a dungeon or on a scaffold, at the time

that he was arrested with his friend Katt.* In a room which Maria Theresa habitually occupied, and in which she transacted business, hung two pictures, and only two ; one was the portrait of John Sobieski, king of Poland, whose heroism had saved Vienna when besieged by the Turks in 1683 ; the other represented her grandfather Leopold, who owed the preservation of his country, his capital, his crown, his very existence, to the intervention of the Poles on that memorable occasion.

After the partition of Poland, Maria Theresa appeared at the height of her grandeur, power, and influence as a sovereign. She had greatly extended her territories ; she had an army on foot of 200,000 men ; her finances were brought into such excellent order, that, notwithstanding her immense expenses, she was able to lay by in her treasury not less than two hundred thousand crowns a year. She lived on terms of harmony with her ambitious, enterprising, and accomplished son and successor, which secured her domestic peace and her political strength ; while her subjects blessed her mild sway, and bestowed on her the title of " Mother of her people."

The rest of the reign of Maria Theresa is not distinguished by any event of importance till the year 1778, when she was again nearly plunged into a war with her old adversary, Frederic of Prussia.

The occasion was this. The Elector of Bavaria died without leaving any son to succeed to his dominions, and his death was regarded by the court of Vienna as a favourable opportunity to revive certain equivocal claims on the part of the Bavarian territories. No sooner did the intelligence of the elector's indisposition arrive at Vienna, than the armies were held in readiness to march. Kaunitz, spreading a map before the empress and her son, pointed out those portions to which he conceived that the claims of Austria might extend ; and Joseph, with all the impetuosity of his character, enforced the views and arguments of the minister. Maria Theresa hesitated ; she was now old and infirm, and averse from all idea of tumult and war. She recoiled from a design of which she perceived at once the

* *Vide* Life of Frederic the Great. Katt, as it is well known, was beheaded in his sight ; and Frederic had very nearly suffered the fate of Don Carlos—that of being assassinated by his crack-brained father.

injustice as well as the imprudence ; and when at last she yielded to the persuasions of her son, she exclaimed, with much emotion, " In God's name, only take what we have a right to demand ! I foresee that it will end in war. My wish is to end my days in peace."

No sooner was a reluctant consent wrung from her, than the Austrians entered Bavaria, and took forcible possession of the greatest part of the electorate.

The King of Prussia was not inclined to be a silent spectator of this scheme of aggrandisement on the part of Austria, and immediately prepared to interfere and dispute her claims to the Bavarian succession. Though now seventy years of age, time had but little impaired either the vigour of his mind or the activity of his frame ; still, with him, " the deed o'ertook the purpose," and his armies were assembled and had entered Bohemia before the court of Vienna was apprised of his movements.

To Frederic was opposed the young Emperor Joseph, at the head of a more numerous force than had ever before taken the field under the banners of Austria, supported by the veteran generals Loudon and Lacy, and burning for the opportunity, which his mother's prudence had hitherto denied him, to distinguish himself by some military exploit, and encounter the enemy of his family on the field of battle.

But how different were all the views and feelings of the aged empress ! how changed from what they had been twenty years before ! She regarded the approaching war with a species of horror : her heart still beat warm to all her natural affections ; but hatred, revenge, ambition—sentiments which had rather been awakened there by circumstances than native to her disposition, were dead within her. When the troops from different parts of her vast empire assembled at Vienna, and marched with all their military ensigns past the windows of her palace, she ordered her shutters to be closed. Her eyes were constantly suffused with tears ; her knees continually bent in prayer. Half conscious of the injustice of her cause, she scarcely dared to ask a blessing on her armies ; she only hoped by supplication to avert the immediate wrath of Heaven.

Her son-in-law, Albert of Saxony, had a command in the imperial army ; and, bound in honour to the Austrian cause, it might possibly have become a part of his military duty to assist in desolating his native country. His wife, the Archduchess Christina, who sympathised in all the feelings of her husband, deprecated the idea of a war which must place him in a dilemma so painful and perplexing ; but the influence of the Emperor Joseph overpowered hers. All the preparations for the campaign being completed, the emperor and his brother Maximilian set off for the camp at Olmutz, in April 1778. When they waited on the empress, to take their leave and receive her parting benediction, she held them long in her arms, weeping bitterly : and when the emperor at length tore himself from her embraces, she nearly fainted away.

During the next few months she remained in the interior of her palace, melancholy and anxious, but not passive or inactive. She was revolving the means of terminating a war which she detested. Her evident reluctance seems to have paralysed her generals ; for the whole of this campaign, which had opened with such tremendous preparations, passed without any great battle, or any striking incident, except the capture of Habelschwert, which, as it opened a passage into Silesia, was likely to be followed by important consequences. When Colonel Palavicini arrived at Vienna with the tidings of this event, and laid the standards taken from the enemy at the feet of the empress, she received him with complacency ; but when he informed her that the town and inhabitants of Habelschwert had suffered much from the fury of the troops, she opened her bureau, and taking out a bag containing five hundred ducats, " I desire," said she, " that this sum may be distributed in my name among the unfortunate sufferers, whose houses or effects have been plundered by my soldiery : it will be of some little use and consolation to them under their misfortunes."

There were some who admired, and some who censured this display of generosity towards an enemy's town ; but when we consider the thoughts and designs which Maria Theresa was now revolving, we may easily suppose that there might be a mixture of policy as well as a great deal of real benevolence in this action.

She still retained something of the firmness and decision of her former years : age, which had subdued her haughty spirit, had not enfeebled her powers ; and in this emergency she took the only measures left to avert the miseries of a terrible and unjust war. Unknown to her son, and even without the knowledge of Kaunitz, she acted for herself and for her people with a degree of independence, resolution, and good feeling which awakens our best sympathies, and fills us with admiration both for the sovereign and the woman. She despatched a confidential officer with a letter addressed to the King of Prussia, in which she avowed her regret that, in their old age, Frederic and herself "should be about to tear the grey hairs from each other's head."* "I perceive," said she, "with extreme sensibility, the breaking out of a new war. My age, and my earnest desire for maintaining peace, are well known ; and I cannot give a more convincing proof than by the present proposal. My maternal heart is justly alarmed for the safety of my two sons and my son-in-law, who are in the army. I have taken this step without the knowledge of my son the emperor, and I entreat, whatever may be the event, that you will not divulge it. I am anxious to recommence and terminate the negotiation hitherto conducted by the emperor, and broken off to my extreme regret. This letter will be delivered to you by Baron Thugut, who is entrusted with full powers. Ardently hoping that it may fulfil my wishes, conformably to my dignity, I entreat you to join your efforts with mine to re-establish between us harmony and good intelligence, for the benefit of mankind, and the interest of our respective families."†

This letter enclosed proposals of peace on moderate terms. The king's answer is really honourable to himself, as well as to the empress-queen :—

"Baron Thugut has delivered to me your Imperial Majesty's letter, and no one is or shall be acquainted with his arrival. It was worthy of your Majesty's character to give these proofs of magnanimity and moderation in a litigious cause, after having so heroically maintained the inheritance of your ancestors. The tender attachment which you display for your son the emperor,

* Her own words.

† Coxe's "*Memoirs of the House of Austria*," vol. ii. p. 531.

and the princes of your blood, deserves the applause of every feeling mind, and augments, if possible, the high consideration which I entertain for your sacred person. I have added some articles to the propositions of Baron Thugut, most of which have been allowed, and others will, I hope, meet with little difficulty. He will immediately depart for Vienna, and will be able to return in five or six days, during which time I will act with such caution, that your Imperial Majesty may have no cause of apprehension for the safety of any part of your family, and particularly of the emperor, whom I love and esteem, although our opinions differ in regard to the affairs of Germany."

It is pleasing to see these two sovereigns, after thirty-eight years of systematic hostility, mutual wrongs, and personal aversion, addressing each other in terms so conciliatory, and which, as the event showed, were at this time sincere.

The accommodation was not immediately arranged. Frederic demurred on some points, and the Emperor Joseph, when made acquainted with the negotiation, was indignant at the concessions which his mother had made, and which he deemed humiliating—as if it *could* be humiliating to undo wrong, to revoke injustice, to avert crime, and heal animosities. But Maria Theresa was not discouraged, nor turned from her generous purpose. She was determined that the last hours of her reign should not, if possible, be stained by bloodshed or disturbed by tumult. She implored the mediation of the Empress of Russia. She knew that the reigning foible of the imperial Catherine, like that of the plebeian Pompadour, was vanity—intense, all-absorbing vanity—and that she might be soothed and flattered by the same means. She addressed to her, therefore, an eloquent letter, in which praise and deference and argument were so well mingled, and so artfully calculated to win that vainglorious but accomplished woman, that she receded from her first design of supporting the King of Prussia, and consented to interfere as mediatrix. After a long negotiation and many difficulties, which Maria Theresa met and overcame with firmness and talent worthy of her brightest days, the peace was signed at Teschen, in Saxony, on the 13th day of May, the birthday of the empress-queen.

Maria Theresa was often heard to declare, that no event of her long reign had ever caused her such unmingled satisfaction as the Peace of Teschen : she might have added, that no action of her long life ever did her so much honour. It was a peace bought without effusion of blood ; it was entirely her own work, undertaken and carried through upon the most righteous and benevolent principles, and Heaven had blessed it accordingly. When the intelligence was brought to Vienna, that Frederic had agreed to the conditions of peace, she burst into tears, and exclaimed in a broken voice : " I am overpowered with joy ! I do not love Frederic, but I must do him the justice to confess that he has acted nobly and honourably. He promised me that he would make peace upon reasonable terms, and he has kept his word. I am inexpressibly happy to spare the effusion of so much blood !" She then repaired to the church of the Capuchins, and returned public thanks to God for the restoration of peace.

The Treaty of Teschen was the last political event of Maria Theresa's reign in which she was actively and personally concerned. Her health had been for some time declining, and for several months previous to her death she was unable to move from her chair without assistance. An English traveller, who was introduced to her about this time, describes her as an old lady, immensely corpulent, habited in the deepest weeds, with her grey hair slightly powdered, and turned back under a cap of black crape. Notwithstanding her many infirmities, her deportment was still dignified, her manner graceful as well as gracious, and her countenance benign.

The disorder from which she suffered was a dropsy, accompanied by an induration of the lungs, which brought on fits of suffocation, and at length terminated her existence.

She had long accustomed herself to look death steadily in the face, and when the hour of trial came, her resignation, her fortitude, and her humble trust in Heaven never failed her. She preserved to the last her self-possession and her strength of mind, and betrayed none of those superstitious terrors which might have been expected and pardoned in Maria Theresa.

Her agonies during the last ten days of her life were terrible, but never drew from her a single expression of complaint or

impatience. She was only apprehensive lest her reason and her physical strength might fail her together. She was once heard to say, "God grant that these sufferings may soon terminate, for otherwise I know not if I can much longer endure them." On recovering from a fit of insensibility caused by the violence of pain, she found her son, the emperor, standing near her, dissolved in tears. "Spare me, my son," said she; "my own sufferings do not subdue me, but the sight of your affliction will take away all my firmness!"

After receiving the last sacraments she summoned all her family to her presence, and solemnly recommended them to the care of the emperor. "My son," said she, "as you are the heir of all my worldly possessions I cannot dispose of them; but my children are still, as they have ever been, my *own*; I bequeath them to you: be to them a father. I shall die contented if you promise to take that office upon you." She then turned to her son Maximilian and her daughters, blessed them individually in the tenderest terms, and exhorted them to obey and honour their elder brother as their father and sovereign. Perceiving that they were quite overpowered with emotion, she added calmly, "Retire into the next room, and recover your spirits."

Until the evening preceding her death she was engaged in signing papers, and in giving her last advice and directions to her successor; and when, perceiving her exhausted state, her son entreated her to take some repose, she replied steadily, "In a few hours I shall appear before the judgment seat of God; and would you have me sleep?"

She expressed great anxiety lest those who had long been aided or supported by her private charities should be left destitute, and, in explaining her wishes on this subject, she added, "If I could wish for immortality on earth, it would only be for the power of relieving the distressed."

A short time before she breathed her last she had fallen apparently into a slumber, and as she lay reclined for some time with her eyes closed, one of the attendants said in a low whisper, "The empress sleeps." She immediately opened her eyes: "No," said she, "I do not sleep; *I wish to meet my death awake.*" There is no death-bed speech upon record more simply, more unaffectedly sublime than these words.

After repeated fits of agony and suffocation, endured to the last with the same invariable serenity and patience, death at length released her, and she expired on the 29th of November, 1780, in her sixty-fourth year.

The English minister at Vienna (Sir Robert Keith) describes in strong terms the universal grief for her loss : " Since the death of the empress, everything in this capital wears the face of heartfelt affliction. Every hour brings to the public some additional instance of the astonishing fortitude and unremitting beneficence which accompanied her even to the last agonies of death." " I have lost," says Metastasio, in one of his letters, " I have lost my august and ever adorable patroness, benefactress, and mother ; a loss for which I never hope to be consoled ! " And it is in truth most worthy of remark, that the regrets of her family and her people did not end with the pageant of her funeral, nor were obliterated by the new interests, new hopes, new splendours of a new reign. Years after her death she was still remembered with tenderness and respect, and her subjects dated events from the time of their " mother " the empress. The Hungarians, who regarded themselves as her own especial people, still distinguish their country from Austria and Bohemia by calling it the " territory of the queen."

The earthly dower of Maria Theresa was certainly the richest ever granted to a mortal : a strong mind and a feeling heart, royalty and beauty, long life and prosperity, a happy marriage, a numerous family, her people's love, the admiration of the universe ! These were hers ; and her biographers generally sum up her character by justly styling her the most blameless and beneficent sovereign who ever wore a crown. With equal truth they assert, that the errors and the weaknesses which tarnished her great and good qualities were either rendered excusable by circumstances, or were almost inseparable from her sex and from humanity. But while we excuse them, may we not lament that the consequences of these venial errors and frailties were not confined within a smaller circle ? May we not grieve that the feminine mistakes, passions, and sympathies of an amiable woman should cost humanity so dear ? should arm nations against each other ? should lead her into the commission of monstrous injustice ? should have power to

suppress knowledge, perpetuate prejudice, and check the intellectual improvement of a whole people? For all this is true—as true as that the real elevation of her mind, and the warm and genuine affections of her heart rendered her one of the most admirable and amiable of women.

Among the descendants of Maria Theresa now living (1834) may be mentioned Maria Amélia, the present Queen of France, and the Duchess d'Angoulême, who are both her granddaughters; the Duchess de Berri, and Marie Louise, the widow of Napoleon, who are both her great-granddaughters. Including the families of the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of France and Naples, the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the Duke of Modena, and the ex-Emperor of Brazil,* the descendants of Maria Theresa probably amount to between seventy and eighty princes and princesses.

* His first wife was the Archduchess Leopoldine of Austria, the great-granddaughter of Maria Theresa.



CATHERINE II.

AS Russia presents during the last century the very extraordinary spectacle of an empire, as vast as that of the Assyrians of old, under the despotic sway of five women successively,* it is only justice to Catherine II., as well as to the peculiar subject of this little book, to pass her female predecessors in review before us.

In a state of barbarism, extremes in manners, morals, and government meet and mingle. Before the time of Peter the Great, the women of Russia were considered as an inferior order of beings; for instance, in a census of the population, the men were denominated *souls*, but the appellation was never given to the women. They never ate in presence of their husbands, nor ever mingled in the same amusements; great part of the most laborious occupations fell upon the females; if they were not absolutely incarcerated or secluded after the Turkish fashion, they seem to have been treated much as the North American Indians treat their squaws. The great Peter, in his usually persuasive manner, kicked, cudgelled, and knouted his loving subjects into something more of gallantry; but he who beheld with such indignation, and avenged with such frightful barbarity, the ambitious interference of his sister Sophia, could scarcely have anticipated the trans-

* Catherine I.; Anne; the Regent Anne, mother of Ivan; Elizabeth; Catherine II.; with an interval of only a few months between Catherine I. and Anne, and between Elizabeth and Catherine II.

formation of his iron sceptre into a distaff.* It was not by the will of Peter, but by the machinations of Menzikoff, that his celebrated widow Catherine I. succeeded him in 1725. Her story is one of the romances of history; her government, one of its most disgraceful pages. Her reign of two years was, in truth, the reign of Menzikoff, her former lover; no measures, either public or domestic, appear to have emanated from her own will. She could neither read nor write; she hated business, and, released from the restraint and apprehension in which she was kept by that sublime savage her husband, in spite of all her power over him, she abandoned herself to indolence, and to a most irregular and profligate life. She fell at length into habits of intoxication, which shortened her existence, and died prematurely at the age of thirty-nine.

On the death of Peter II., a boy of fourteen, who reigned nominally for a few months, Anne, the niece of Peter I., was placed on the throne; she reigned ten years—or rather Biren, her favourite and chamberlain, reigned in her name: he governed as absolutely and as sternly as Carraccioli governed Joanna II. of Naples. It availed but little to her unfortunate people that Anne herself had the same mild temper which distinguished Joanna, whom she also resembled in her weakness and her passiveness: her arrogant and cruel favourite banished more than twenty thousand persons into the wilds of Siberia, besides those who perished on the scaffold, and suffered other punishments more or less cruel. The empress was occasionally known to plead with tears for some of these wretched sufferers, and plead in vain; and Biren, like Carraccioli, is said to have struck his imbecile mistress when she ventured to dispute his wishes.

It was in the reign of the Empress Anne that that far-famed palace of ice was erected on the banks of the Neva. This truly imperial toy was constructed in honour of the

* Formerly there existed, in the Kremlin at Moscow, the throne constructed for the Princes Ivan and Peter, with a recess behind, where their sister Sophia sat to dictate to them their answers to all ambassadors, and watch their conduct in public business. (See Heber's Journal.) Thus it appears that the arbitrary sway of females in Russia commenced thirty years before Catherine I.

nuptials of Prince Galitzen with a princess of the house of Dolgorucki, and jestingly intended as a mansion to receive the bride and bridegroom. It cost some millions of roubles, yet would have deserved to be forgotten, if it had not suggested a descriptive passage in Cowper's "Task," as gorgeous, as fairy-like, but much more lasting than itself.*

Anne closed a life as unhappy and insignificant as her reign was mischievous and disgraceful, in 1740. Biren endeavoured to prolong his power by proclaiming the young Prince Ivan as emperor, by the title of Ivan III., and declared himself regent. The mother of the infant prince was Anne of Mecklenburg, grand-daughter of Ivan, the eldest brother of Peter the Great. Instigated by her husband, she seized upon the regency, arrested Biren in the height of his power, and sent him to Siberia. She governed Russia as regent for about a year, and is represented as a woman of mild character, but without any one quality which could enable her to conduct a government. Her very virtues turned against her; for having, from a feeling of humanity, rejected the proposal to arrest her cousin Elizabeth, this princess, by a sudden revolution, caused by the revolt of a few guards, was placed on the throne in December, 1741. Ivan and his parents were imprisoned during the remainder of their lives; the former was immured in the dungeon of Schlüsselburg, and his family in a fortress near Archangel, on the shores of the Arctic Ocean.

Some of the circumstances attending the deposition of the young emperor were very picturesque and characteristic. When the soldiers sent to arrest him reached his apartment, they found him asleep in his cradle (he was then about eighteen months old), and not presuming to awake him, they stood round him, motionless and silent, while the poor unconscious infant slumbered on. In about an hour he opened his eyes, and one of these fierce men immediately seized him; but

*

"No forest fell,

Imperial mistress of the fur-clad Russ,
When thou wouldst build; no quarry sent its stores
To enrich thy walls: but thou didst hew the floods
And make thy marble of the glassy wave:
Silently as a dream the fabric rose!" &c.

others disputing with their comrade the honour of carrying the infant emperor, the child became terrified and began to cry, on which they desisted, and suffered his nurse to bear him. On being brought before Elizabeth, she took him in her arms, kissed him, and while she was caressing him the soldiers below shouted "Hourra, Elizaveta!" Pleased with the noise the child clapped his little hands, laughed, and tried to imitate the sounds he heard, even in the arms of his destroyer. Elizabeth, much affected, melted into tears, exclaiming, "Poor little creature, thou little knowest that thou art trying to speak against thyself!" She then, with the tears yet wet on her cheek, resigned him from her arms to a perpetual dungeon.

Elizabeth, the youngest daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine I., was in her thirty-second year when she was proclaimed empress, and reigned twenty years—from 1741 to 1761. She possessed neither the genius of her father, nor the strength of mind which had distinguished and elevated her mother; but she appears to have been endued by nature with every gentle and attractive quality of her sex: beautiful in person, gracious and popular in manners, to look upon her was to love her; her disposition was tenderness itself, and she began her reign by pronouncing the well-known vow, "Never to put a subject to death upon any provocation whatever."

Whether there be something in the possession of unlimited power which tends to corrupt the best of natures, or whether the foibles of Elizabeth, which in private life would scarcely have detracted from the general amiability of her character, became aggravated into vices by indulgence, it is certain that no sovereign of whom we read in history has left behind a reputation more thoroughly odious. That she was a woman "naturally born to fears;" that she was timid, susceptible, indolent, and much fonder of pleasure than of managing fleets, finances, and armies, could hardly, as a woman, be objected to her; but conceive such a sovereign at the head of a vast and complicated scheme of government, the least details of which she could scarce comprehend, holding in her feeble and negligent hands the destinies of millions of human beings!—what a picture! Her timidity, irritated by continual and very natural terrors for her own safety, rendered her suspicious and

cruel; and her inclination for pleasure, unchecked by any restraint whatever, sank her into the most shameless profligacy. Two unworthy favourites, her minister Bestucheff and her lover Razumoffsky, managed the whole government; and never were more wretches tortured, knouted to death, mutilated, and banished to Siberia, than in the reign of this *merciful* empress; who, mingling bigotry, licentiousness, and cruelty with a kind of maudlin sentimentality, never heard of a battle, or signed a warrant against a criminal, without shedding tears. The last ten years of her life were spent in fits of terror, fits of love, fits of devotion, and fits of intoxication; her excesses at length brought on disorders which terminated her disgraceful existence, and she died literally with a cup of brandy at her lips.*

Elizabeth, in order to deprive the family of Ivan of all hopes of the succession, had early in her reign declared her nephew Peter the heir to her throne.† She created him Grand Duke of Russia, and he was brought up in her court from the age of thirteen; but from the moment she had caused him to be acknowledged her successor, she regarded this unfortunate boy with terror, dislike, and suspicion. She was in continual apprehension of some revolution in his favour; she kept him in a subordinate situation; she surrounded him with spies, and mean, ignorant persons. She not only neglected his education, but with a detestable policy, the result of her feminine jealousies and fears, she gave him advisedly such an education as would tend to weaken and corrupt his mind. One of the bedchamber women attending on Elizabeth, who had long been attached to the imperial family, and had an affection for the Grand Duke, once ventured to remonstrate against this base and ungenerous system. One evening, as she was undressing the empress, she turned the conversation on Peter, which was not difficult from the avidity with which Elizabeth encouraged every species of scandal concerning him. "If your Majesty," said this faithful and courageous woman, "do not permit the prince to know

* *Vide* Life of Catherine II.

† Anne, the eldest daughter of Peter the Great and Catherine, had married the Duke of Holstein-Gottorp, and Peter was the only issue of this marriage.

anything of what is necessary for governing the country, what do you think will become of him, and what do you think will become of the empire?" Elizabeth, turning round, fixed her eyes upon her attendant: "Johanna," said she, in a slow and ominous tone, "*knowest thou the road to Siberia?*" Johanna knew it so well, that she took the hint, and never ventured to repeat her remonstrance.

In 1747, Elizabeth married her nephew to the daughter of the Prince of Anhalt-Zerbst.* This extraordinary woman was born at Stettin, in Prussia, May 2, 1729, and consequently was not more than eighteen when she was brought by her mother to Petersburg, to be united to the Grand Duke of Russia. She had hitherto borne the name of Sophia Augusta Frederica, but on abjuring the Lutheran religion she was re-baptized, according to the Russian law and the rites of the Greek Church, and took the name of Catherine Alexiena. At the period of her marriage she was graceful, lively, and accomplished, full of talent and ambition: Peter, who had naturally a better heart, and an understanding not much inferior to that of his wife, had been spoiled, almost brutalised, by a bad education. Although some degree of attachment had at first existed between them, it was not of long duration. Catherine was disgusted by the rudeness, ignorance, and low tastes of her husband, while he appears to have been alternately enchanted by her graces, abashed by her superiority, and enraged by her infidelities. Already he entertained the idea of divorcing his wife, and she already meditated, if not the destruction of her husband, at least the overthrow of his power, when the death of the feeble, cruel, and profligate Elizabeth raised her nephew to the throne, by the title of Peter III.

The first acts of his reign displayed both good sense and beneficence. He avenged himself on no one, though he had reason to complain of many; he treated the Empress Catherine

* The true reason which induced Elizabeth to select this young princess was the remembrance of her early attachment for Catherine's uncle, to whom she had been betrothed, but who died before the union was solemnized. Elizabeth, for his sake, abjured marriage, and, it is said, never afterwards mentioned him but with tears. *Au reste*—she certainly did not pique herself on fidelity to his memory.

with great deference and kindness, and seemed proud of the grace and dignity with which she enacted the part of sovereign, and played off those airs of royalty in which he was himself greatly deficient. But Catherine, who well knew the real instability of his mind and the violence of his temper, either would not or could not trust him. She made no attempt to regain his affection, or to direct or assist him by her superior talents and firmness ; meantime, the conspiracy for depriving the Czar of his throne gained new partisans every day, for after the first few months he fell into his old habits of intemperance, betrayed his dislike and indifference towards his wife in a very insulting manner, and was guilty of the strangest acts of folly and imprudence.

There were three separate conspiracies against the unfortunate Peter ; and Catherine, while she appeared to do nothing of herself, was in reality the mover of all. The principal persons concerned, besides the empress, were Count Panin, the preceptor of her son Paul ; her lover, Gregory Orloff, and his brother Alexey, two officers in the Guards ; Razumoffsky, the hetman or commander of the Cossacks ; and the Princess Dashkoff, then about eighteen, a young woman of masculine abilities and resolution, and devotedly attached to the Empress Catherine, who, in return, professed a great affection for her, and artfully flattered her ambition with the most brilliant promises. All these were agreed in the project of dethroning the Czar ; but while Orloff and the Princess Dashkoff wished to confer the supreme authority on Catherine, Panin and Razumoffsky thought this was hazarding too much, and advised that she should govern as regent in the name of her son Paul.

While things were in this situation, and Catherine under the daily apprehension of seeing her schemes betrayed, herself arrested, repudiated, and even put to death, she never lost her presence of mind : though of course there were moments when conscious guilt, and terror, and suspense must have agonized her soul, she maintained the same unvarying serenity in her countenance and deportment. The conspirators waited only for a favourable moment to strike the first blow, and this was precipitated by an unexpected accident.

Peter, who was preparing to set out on a military expedition

against Denmark, had gone to spend a few days at his country palace at Oranienbaum, whence he was to proceed to the palace of Peterhof; and there, as affording greater facilities for the purpose, the conspirators intended to seize and carry off the emperor. In the meantime a soldier in the Guards, who had been gained over, innocently asked his captain on what day they were to take up arms against the emperor. The captain, who knew nothing of the conspiracy, was immediately alarmed, and gave notice to his superiors. One of the most violent of the conspirators, on being arrested, had just time to write with his pencil on a slip of paper, "Proceed to execution this instant, or we are undone," and the note was carried to the Princess Dashkoff. It was then nine at night; she immediately gave intelligence to her party, and their measures were hastily concerted, and as quickly carried into execution. The empress was sleeping at Peterhof,* where she had taken up her residence to meet and receive her husband, that being the spot chosen for his betrayal. About two o'clock in the morning Catherine was roused from her sleep, and perceived an officer standing by her bed-side: it was Alexey Orloff. He merely said, "Your Majesty has not a moment to lose: rise and follow me;" he then disappeared. She called her confidential maid Ivanovna; they dressed themselves in haste. The officer returned and led them to the garden-gate, where a carriage stood waiting; the empress and the maid being placed in it, Alexey seized the reins, and they set off at a full gallop. They had not proceeded far when the horses fell, and Catherine was obliged to alight and walk. Every moment's delay increased their danger, but she did not lose her courage or her spirits; she was resolved to proceed to Petersburg on foot. She had walked about a mile when they met a peasant driving a country cart; Alexey Orloff immediately seized the horses, placed the empress in the cart, and thus drove her to the capital, where she arrived almost exhausted with fatigue, but still with an unbroken spirit, at seven in the morning.

She immediately presented herself to the soldiers, and in a speech assured them that the Czar, her husband, had intended to put her and her son to death that very night, and that she

* About twenty miles from Petersburg.

had no other means of escaping but by throwing herself on their protection. This falsehood was believed at the moment, and the men swore they would die in her defence ; several regiments of Guards, who had been gained over by the conspirators, now surrounded her ; the Orloffs and a few others raised the cry of "Long live the Empress Catherine !" and the soldiers threw up their caps, and echoed it with shouts. The officers who were in the secret encouraged them, while those who were not were so confused and intimidated, they dared not oppose the torrent. One officer, Villebois, the general of artillery, ventured to remonstrate, on which Catherine, turning round haughtily, told him she did not want his advice, but to know what he intended to do. The general was so confounded by her assumed air of command, that he could only stammer out, "To obey your Majesty," and immediately delivered the arsenals and magazines of the city into her hands. Thus in two hours did Catherine find herself called to the throne, with an army at her command, and the capital at her feet.

In the afternoon the Archbishop of Novogorod put the crown on her head, *Te Deum* was sung in all the churches, and nearly the whole city took the oath of allegiance. It is a remarkable fact, that in the course of this eventful day not a drop of blood was shed ; a few officers only were put under arrest. When the Chancellor Vorontzoff ventured to represent the dangers to which she exposed herself, and the hazard of success, Catherine replied with an inconceivable mixture of hypocrisy and impudence, "You see how it is ; I really cannot do otherwise ; I am only yielding to the ardent sensibility of my people !" and she sent the chancellor to his own house with a guard over him. Vorontzoff was the father of the Princess Dashkoff, but had hitherto been a steady adherent of the emperor.

While these extraordinary transactions were taking place in the capital, Peter III., in full security and ignorance, had ordered his carriage to proceed from Oranienbaum to Peterhof, where he was met by the news of the revolution. He was seized with a degree of horror and confusion which took away the use of his faculties ; he had with him the brave Field-

Marshal Munich, and who alone was equal to an army ; and had Peter taken the advice of this faithful friend and veteran general he would have saved himself, and probably have effected a counter-revolution. But, surrounded by clamorous women, and false friends, who had sold or betrayed him, he was stunned and perplexed by contradictory counsels ; he could resolve on nothing, and his imbecility was like that of a terrified child. Several expedients were proposed and abandoned, and confusion and dismay spread among his servants and followers. At last he sat down and wrote a submissive letter to Catherine, acknowledging his errors, and proposing to share the sovereign authority with her. She made no answer either to this or to two successive letters which he despatched, entreating her clemency ; but she sent Count Panin to him, who persuaded this infatuated prince to sign a declaration that he was not fit to reign, and that he voluntarily abdicated the throne. The same evening he was conveyed under a strong guard to the palace of Ropscha : while there, he petitioned Catherine to let him have an old negro buffoon, who amused him, a favourite dog, his violin, a Bible, and a few romances ; none of these requests were granted, and his petition was only made the subject of ridicule.

It was necessary that some apparent reason should be given for such extraordinary proceedings ; a short manifesto was accordingly set forth, proclaiming the accession of Catherine, without any mention of the unhappy emperor, but alleging as her only motives for assuming the government her tender regard for the welfare of the people, and, above all, for the holy and orthodox Greek religion, which she feared was exposed to total ruin ; and this notable document of state villany thus concludes :—"For these causes, &c. &c., we, putting our trust in Almighty God, and in His divine justice, have ascended the imperial throne of all the Russias, and have received a solemn oath of fidelity from all our faithful subjects." (Dated June 28, 1762.)*

Thus, by a revolution, which never could have occurred under any other government than that of Russia, which few

* Coxe's Account of the Revolution of 1762.

could account for, and no one seemed to comprehend ; which was accomplished in the course of a single day, without injury to individuals, and without tumultuous violence, did a young woman, a foreigner, a stranger to the imperial blood, spring into the throne of the Czars. The nobles of Russia, accustomed to such scenes, received their new yoke without surprise ; the ignorant, barbarous populace looked on quite passively ; Europe wondered : but it was only the first scene of that stupendous melodrama which Catherine was about to exhibit on the theatre of the world. Her usurpation had been effected with the most extraordinary facility, and with the suddenness of a dream. With equal rapidity she might have been hurled from a throne of which she had possessed herself no one could tell how, or why, or wherefore. "To be thus was nothing, but to be *safely* thus :"—there were three human beings who stood between her and security, and the first, the immediate victim, was necessarily her wretched husband. Peter had many friends : the troops about his person, particularly his Holstein Guards, had been devotedly attached to him, and beheld his downfall with grief and indignation.* Others were discontented because Catherine, instead of governing in the name of her son Paul (now about eight years old) had boldly seized the empire for herself, without even alluding to the Grand Duke since the first day. There were murmurs and symptoms of insubordination at Petersburg, and at Moscow the proclamation of the change of government had been received, both by the nobles and populace, with a sullen silence. The situation of Catherine was fearfully critical, nor can we wonder that she passed several nights without sleep, and was even known to steal from her bed, and walk up and down like a condemned spirit. The sceptre trembled in her hand, for, hardened as she afterwards became, she was yet a woman, and that hand was as yet unstained with blood ; but she had Orloff and the Princess

* Peter's Holstein Guards were embarked on board a vessel to be carried back to their own country. The vessel went to pieces within sight of shore, and all perished ; no one was *permitted* to aid them. That this was contrived is certain ; whether with or without the connivance of Catherine is doubtful.

Dashkoff at her side to whisper "*Thus thou must do*, wouldst thou have it!"* and though her energies might need masculine support, her ambition required no prompter.

Seven days after the accession of Catherine, Peter was assassinated at Ropscha, where he was confined. The manner of his death long remained a mystery, and Catherine's participation at least uncertain, though universally suspected; but now that the whole circumstances of this horrible catastrophe have been disclosed, it seems scarcely possible to acquit her. It appears that Alexey Orloff and Baratinsky, assisted by a certain Lieutenant Passek,† had the charge of the emperor, and when his death was finally resolved on, they, who could look for no mercy if once he re-ascended his throne, were easily persuaded to become his executioners. They first attempted to make him swallow poison; they had administered one dose of the fatal beverage in a glass of brandy, and endeavoured to force upon him another, but the unhappy prince, aware of their purpose, resisted, mingling reproaches with entreaties for mercy. He called for milk to allay the agonizing pains he began to suffer, and they again pressed the poison upon him. One of his valets, a Frenchman, now rushed in, alarmed by his cries and expostulations. Peter immediately ran towards him and threw himself into his arms, exclaiming with a faint voice, "It was not enough to deprive me of the throne of Russia;—I must now be murdered!" The valet attempted to remonstrate, and to supplicate for mercy, but he was forced out of the room, and the work of death was accomplished; but not speedily: the unfortunate Czar, perceiving that his fate was resolved, defended himself for a while with the strength of despair. Though Alexey Orloff was one of the most powerful and gigantic men in Russia, he with difficulty overmastered his victim; he was at length, after a fierce and terrible struggle for existence, flung to the earth, and strangled with a napkin snatched from the dining-table.

When the assassins had completed their purpose, Alexey

* Macbeth, Act i. sc. 5.

† Since created a count, a general, and the governor of a province.

Orloff mounted his horse, and galloped to Petersburg. He found the empress on the point of holding a court, and hastily divulged his errand: the news was not suffered to transpire till proper precautions were taken, and Catherine proceeded with a firm step and unchanged countenance to the presence chamber, where she gave audience with every appearance of cheerfulness and tranquillity. The next day, while the empress was dining in public, the death of the deposed Czar from sudden indisposition was formally announced. She immediately rose from table all bathed in tears, retired with her handkerchief at her eyes, and for several days exhibited the usual symptoms of an "unfelt sorrow."

She afterwards published a manifesto, in which she announced to her passive subjects that it had pleased Almighty God to remove the late Emperor Peter III. from this world, by a violent attack of a malady to which he had heretofore been subject, and desiring them to consider it as an especial act of Providence working in her favour. None were stupid enough to believe this impudent piece of hypocrisy and profaneness, but none were bold enough to contradict it, and this was sufficient to answer Catherine's purpose.

After the death of Peter III., there remained alive two other individuals whose connexion with the imperial family of the Czars was calculated to give Catherine some uneasiness. The first of these was the unhappy Prince Ivan, who had been deposed in his cradle, and had now passed three-and-twenty years in a dungeon. Peremptory orders were given, that on the slightest attempt made to deliver him he should be put to death. About two years after Catherine's accession, such an attempt was made by an officer named Mirovitch, who forced his way into the fortress where the young prince was confined, with the resolution to deliver him. The gaolers obeyed their orders, and stabbed Ivan in his dungeon. When his body, pierced with wounds, was shown to the conspirators, Mirovitch immediately threw down his sword and surrendered, and he was afterwards executed with some of his confederates.

The other person whose existence and whose pretensions were likely to disturb the tranquillity of Catherine, was a

natural daughter of the late Empress Elizabeth,* who had been brought up privately by the name of Princess Tarakanoff. She was then living at Rome, under the care of a kind of governess, and protected and supported by the Polish Prince Radzivil. The empress employed her favourite, Alexey Orloff, to get the young princess into her power. By a stratagem, the most detestable that ever was conceived by a depraved and cruel mind, Alexey first won the heart and confidence of this unfortunate girl, then deceived her into a pretended marriage, and decoyed her on board a Russian vessel in the port of Leghorn : she was conveyed in fetters to Russia, and there thrown into a dungeon, where she perished miserably. It is said that she was drowned ; but by what means, or at what time her death took place was never certainly known.

These were the means by which Catherine secured a throne, to which she had no right whatever, either by hereditary descent or the voice of the people. The power which was founded in blood was necessarily cemented with blood : but it is justice to Catherine to add, that she was not disposed to commit unnecessary atrocities : she had sufficient good sense to perceive that a show of justice and benevolence to her people would strengthen her government ; and that a display of magnificence and spirit would at once dazzle her own subjects, win the respect and support of neighbouring nations, and turn the attention of the world from the steps by which she had ascended to the height of power.

The mere chronology of Catherine's long reign ; the wars in which she was engaged ; her relations of amity or commerce with the surrounding nations, from Great Britain to Japan, and the grand historical and political events of her life, are familiar to all readers : or, if not present to the memory, may be found in the first biographical dictionary at hand. It is more to our present purpose to spread out her great empire as a map before us, and take a view of her character, court, and government as of a vast picture. We shall thus be enabled to form some general estimate of the good she performed, and the evil she perpetrated. Both were on a gigantic scale, for she worked

* It is said that Elizabeth was united to the father of this child (Razumffosky) by a private marriage.

with gigantic means, and held in her hand a lever which shook the universe, even from the East to the West.

Catherine had one overmastering passion—ambition. There are many kinds of ambition : generally speaking, it is a compound of the love of power and the love of praise : but the basis of this woman's character being selfishness, so her ambition began and ended with self. Though it worked in a great sphere, and with large means, and consequently had a delusive appearance of grandeur, it was, in truth, the meanest and narrowest passion that could possess a human mind ; it was without a tincture of generous principle or kindly feeling ; it was the mere vanity of her sex, which had better have been confined to shining in a drawing-room, or ruling a *coterie*.

It may be true, according to the well-known adage in the *Spectator*, “that the love of praise produces excellent effects in women of sense ;” although the principle is perhaps the very worst by which a woman, in her feminine character, could be actuated ; but Catherine was less a woman than a sovereign : she had sense, and her insatiate love of glory produced consequently some good effect. She began her reign by making several wise and admirable regulations for the internal government of her empire : she confirmed the two principal edicts of her unfortunate predecessor ; and appropriated to herself all the credit which belonged to them and to him. The first of these edicts suppressed for ever the Inquisition of State, a horrid engine of despotic tyranny ; and the second regulated the estates of the clergy. She also instituted a new police, and gave a more simple form to the government. She founded several colleges and hospitals on a grand scale, both at Petersburg and Moscow : particularly a foundling and a lying-in hospital, both remarkable for the excellent and benevolent manner in which they were conducted. She endowed two magnificent seminaries at Petersburg : the one for the education of five hundred ladies ; the other, a military school for the same number of young men. She made various enactments to protect commerce ; she encouraged arts and manufactures ; and invited English workmen, and ingenious foreigners of every country, to settle in Russia, allowing them many privileges and

immunities.* She repaired her sea-ports, constructed vessels, fortified her towns, increased her army, and applied herself to business with indefatigable activity and perseverance.

All this was well : but while Catherine promulgated one ukase† after another full of wisdom and benevolence, which were widely spread abroad, and attracted the attention of statesmen, the admiration of philosophers, and the praise and wonder of Europe, all was not done which she intended and willed to be done. She went too fast : she wanted patience ; she wanted goodness ; she wanted a reasoning and a calculating head. She undertook all that she resolved ; but she seldom completed what she undertook ; and though all things appeared possible to a woman inflated with self-will, and of a most vivacious temperament, who had gold, and the lives of men at her disposal, and never spared either, we are surprised, after all, to find how little was really done—to perceive on how false and poor a foundation much of her fame has been raised. We are everywhere struck by vast beginnings and mean endings ; and by the mixture of real barbarism and vulgarity with the ostentation of humanity and refinement. Before Catherine's edicts or intentions could reach the extremities of her empire, they were sure to be perverted by the way ;‡ and we are continually reminded of the remark of Diderot, who compared the Russian empire under Catherine to a fruit rotten before it was ripe : or the yet more clever simile of Joseph I., who called it a "colossus of brass on a pedestal of clay."

As it is impossible to enter here at large into the statistics of Russia, one or two instances shall be given of this utter discrepancy between the assumption and the reality.

We all know that the principal fame of Catherine rests on her celebrated code of laws, and on her title of *Legislatrix* of her

* "The 100,000 colonists which Catherine had at different times (1764 and 1765) brought into her country, the greater part of whom were Germans, were reduced within ten years, by the wickedness and rapacity of the Russian agents, to less than 29,000, dispersed and languishing about Saratof, Kief, &c." (Life of Catherine, vol. ii. p. 335, 3rd edit.)

† An imperial ordinance, or proclamation, having the same effect as a law.

‡ Vie de l'Impératrice Catherine II., vol. ii. p. 333.

dominions. We find this repeated and insisted upon in every work which treats of her or of Russia. Even Frederic of Prussia, who did not love her, said, "If several women as sovereigns have obtained a deserved celebrity—Semiramis for her conquests, Elizabeth of England for her political sagacity, Maria Theresa for her astonishing firmness of character—to Catherine alone may be given the title of a female Law-giver."*

But surely on this point her claims to a glory, singular indeed, if deserved, have been strangely overrated. It is true that she published some excellent edicts ; one, for instance, by which she abolished the use of torture in particular cases, and another, towards the end of her reign, by which that horrid practice was annulled for ever. By attending to her courts of justice, by the appointment of new judges, and by the increase of their salaries, she endeavoured to render, and did render, much service to her people. But with regard to her famous code of laws, about which Voltaire writes in such a rapture of adulation, its true history appears to be this :—Catherine, intending to give a new code to her empire, drew up a set of instructions in her own handwriting, which consisted of a tissue of paragraphs taken principally from Montesquieu's "*Esprit des Loix*," and Beccaria's treatise on crime and punishment, and other well-known writers. To have had recourse to such great authorities could scarcely have been made a subject of ridicule, if she had not laid claim to originality and authorship, and received with such arrogant self-complacency the compliments and flatteries of all Europe. She then assembled deputies from all the provinces of her empire, who met in great state at Moscow, and the instructions of the empress were read aloud ; the deputies were then dismissed, and a committee was appointed to digest and arrange this intended code ; year after year passed, and at last a kind of preamble was published, but Catherine found it much easier to publish ukases than to make laws. She grew tired of her code and her committee ; other interests had seized on her versatile mind. As the members of this council of legislators had each a good salary, it became at last a mere job : if some minister or favourite had a poor relative or dependant to provide for, it was only getting him appointed one of this committee ; so that not

* *Séjur*, vol. ii. p. 176.

unfrequently it numbered among its members persons who were as ignorant as they were worthless and wicked. The abuse increasing every day, it was at last dissolved, but the fame of the legislatrix and her code survived. The copy of her instructions, magnificently bound, was enclosed in a casket enriched with gold and jewels, and deposited in the imperial library at Petersburg, where it was exhibited to strangers as a venerable curiosity, and where it is still to be seen.*

Catherine is said to have doubled the resources and revenues of her empire. Undoubtedly she increased its resources by the extension of her commerce; and by her conquests over the Turks, which threw open the trade and navigation of the Mediterranean, she greatly added to the riches and power of Russia: but she wasted her resources much faster than she could create them, and she exhausted her treasury more quickly than she could replenish it. She doubled and trebled the taxes on her people, and we find whole provinces driven to desperation by the legal pillage of her tyrannical officers. Her court was maintained with oriental pomp and luxury. The fame of her liberality and her munificence resounded through Europe; but were these proper appellations for that guilty prodigality with which she lavished the property of her people?† She used to call her vast empire "*mon petit ménage*." She said to the Prince de Ligne, "*On dit toujours que je vais faire banqueroute; que je fais tant de dépenses. Eh bien, mon petit ménage va toujours son train!*" It was easy to *say* this; and the "*petit ménage*," from her imperial lips, must have sounded very airy, and grand, and graceful; but shall we suffer ourselves to be cheated with pretty phrases? To find some parallel for the criminal profusion of

* *Memoirs of the Court of Petersburg*, vol. ii.; and Ségur adds another cause for the dissolution of this committee: "*Au bruit de ces discussions, les serfs de quelques seigneurs, agités par l'espoir de la liberté, commençaient en plusieurs lieux à faire craindre des insurrections; l'assemblée fut dissoute, et l'impératrice se vit réduite à rédiger seule les lois.*"

† Catherine's establishment of favourites cost her, on a moderate computation, eighty-nine millions of roubles (about twelve millions sterling). One-third more, it is said, ought to be added to this sum, because there are no means of calculating the possessions either of Potemkin or Zuboff.

Catherine, a profusion which exceeds all calculation, all belief, we ought to go back to the days of Heliogabalus and the Caliph Vathek. Where she enriched one worthy family, she reduced by her misgovernment hundreds to starvation and beggary : where she gave a few hundred roubles to pension a learned man, or a few thousands to endow a college or a hospital, she showered millions on greedy and worthless favourites. She gave away as gifts estates equal in extent to provinces : by a word, by a stroke of her pen, she, who called her people her children, and ordered the word *subject* to be substituted for the word *slave*, gave away thousands, tens of thousands of peasants,* poor wretches, who in Russia are transferred like cattle from one proprietor to another. She gave diamonds by handfuls, and made gold and silver as common as pebbles. Yet when we read over the names and qualifications of those who were the confidants or ministers of Catherine, of those who were particularly distinguished by her munificence, it is like looking over the peerage of Pandemonium ;—for where but *there*, and in the court of Russia, could such an assemblage of fiends and savages, ruffians and reptiles, have been congregated together, to bask in a monarch's smile, and fatten on the blood and tears of an oppressed people? The plausible profligate Besborodko was another Belial : Alexey Orloff, a sort of Beelzebub ; the insatiate Zuboff, another Mammon ; Narishkin, the cunning, caustic buffoon of the court, another Mephistopheles. “ Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood,” might have found a parallel in a Suvaroff, or a Drevitch, or a Kamensky, of butchering memory ; and Potemkin, with his foot on the necks of them all, might have sat for the lost Archangel himself. Catherine, surrounded by this court of demons and cormorants, was compared by her flatterers to Juno in the midst of the gods ; but methinks that, without going out of Pandemonium, we might have found a prototype for her too.†

To return to Catherine and her finances : it is evident that she had no system, but that of taking with one hand and giving with another. She had not, like Maria Theresa, an *arithmetical*

* To the Orloffs alone she gave 45,000 peasants.

† “ The one seem'd woman to the waist, and fair,” &c.

head ; and she was too self-willed and impatient to pursue any regular and permanent method. When she had drained her internal resources, the pillage of the Crimea, of Poland, and of Courland, which were, in a manner, confiscated during her reign, supplied her profusion ; but she left her treasury empty, and her revenues in the most horrible state of confusion and dilapidation. Her conduct with regard to her coinage ought to be contrasted with that of Maria Theresa. In the time of Catherine, the gold and silver coin of Russia was so shamefully debased, as to have become a by-word ; and the want of money frequently drove her to other expedients, most disgraceful to herself and mischievous to her people.*

To this it may be added, that the Government monopolized the sale of spirituous liquors, and consequently drunkenness, the principal vice of the Russians, was encouraged rather than repressed, as being a fruitful source of revenue. Nor does it give us a high idea of Catherine's internal regulations, when we turn from her brilliant court and capital to behold plague and famine raging in her provinces ; when we read of continual seditions and rebellions, of which there were six or seven in the first ten years of her reign. The rebellion of Pugatcheff cost the lives of one hundred thousand men, before it was suppressed.†

Under the year 1771, we find recorded one of the most striking and awful events that could be found in the annals of a great monarchy. All the inhabitants of one large province, lying to the north of Astracan, rendered desperate by the cruelty and oppression of the governor placed over them, emigrated *en masse*, to the number of seventy or eighty thousand people ; and marching eastwards, sought the protection of the Emperor of China, who gave them lands, and settled them in his dominions. Catherine sent an embassy to require that her fugitive subjects should be sent back to her ; but Kien-long replied in a

* *Vide* Essai sur le Commerce de la Russie.

† It was to perpetuate the memory of this rebellion that Catherine, in a grand fit of imperial indignation, changed the name of one of the principal rivers of Russia ; and commanded that it should no longer be called the Yaïk, but the Ural.

high strain, commenting on the tyranny of the Russian empress, and refusing to deliver up those who, like children, had sought his paternal protection. Catherine, unaccustomed to missives in this tone, was enraged, and she ever afterwards indulged a truly feminine spite against the Emperor of China. In her correspondence with Voltaire she affected to turn the whole matter into ridicule, but she did not speedily recover from this mortification; and the territory abandoned by these poor people still remains comparatively a desert.

Catherine, during her lifetime, published a list of two hundred and forty-five cities which she had founded in her dominions. This sounds grand: but after the lapse of fifty years we may look round us as vainly for *her* cities, as for those of the Babylonian Semiramis. Cherson, which some years ago might have been deemed an exception to this remark, is now sinking into decay, and its commerce annihilated.* In some instances, she merely indicated the spot where she intended or willed that a city should be erected: in others, she merely, by her imperial ukase, gave the name of city to some hamlet or village, or enlarged or rebuilt part of a dilapidated town. It was in allusion to this well-known vanity that Joseph II. once made a speech not less true than pointed. When he met her on her famous voyage down the Dnieper in 1787, he accompanied her to lay the foundations of a new city, to be called after her name, Ekaterinaslof; and which, in her imagination, already rivalled Petersburg. The empress laid the first stone in great pomp, and the emperor laid the second. On his return from this ceremony, Joseph remarked in his dry, epigrammatic manner, "The empress and I have this day achieved a great work; she has laid the first stone of a great city, and I have laid the *last*." His speech was prophetic—the city never proceeded farther; nor does it appear that it was ever thought of more, though we find it inserted in most of the maps of Russia.

Catherine's philosophical toleration of all religions, and her magnanimity in granting an asylum to the Jesuits, when they were banished from the other states of Europe, have been much admired; and we have all heard of her famous "Dinner of

* *Vide* Heber's Journal, published in his life: and Clarke's Travels.

Toleration," when the clergy of every persuasion dined together by her order.* But it must be observed, that Catherine herself had not the slightest tincture of religious feeling in her composition. The Lutheran faith, in which she had been brought up, she changed, with unhesitating facility, for the Greek Church ; and to have gained Turkey, she would have turned Mahometan. Her toleration was indifference ; and though she occasionally put on an air of sanctity to please the populace, we find from her letters to Voltaire, and elsewhere, that she was in reality an *esprit fort*, and a disciple of the French school of scepticism. It is worth remarking, that while Maria Theresa's pilgrimages and prayers have been ridiculed, no one has ridiculed Catherine's pilgrimage to the Virgin at Moscow,† because everyone knew that with her it was mere policy : but which was, in point of fact, the most ridiculous, the heartfelt though mistaken piety of the one, or the despicable and impudent farce played off by the other ?

The patronage which Catherine extended to art, science, and literature was munificent and sensible, but it has been greatly overrated, and the dazzling reputation which during her life she courted by every means, and purchased at any price, shrinks and grows dim before the test of truth.

For instance, all Europe at one time rung with her Academy of Sciences. It was planned by Peter I. ; carried into execution by his widow, endowed by Elizabeth, and enlarged and enriched by Catherine. The traveller Coxe, who visited Petersburg towards the end of her reign, remarks that Catherine's literary institutions had hitherto produced very little effect. When she founded her Academy of Sciences in imitation of the French Academy, she could find no one in her vast dominions fitter for the office of President and Director than her old friend Princess Dashkoff, and she was installed accordingly.

This celebrated woman, who had played such a conspicuous part in the revolution of 1762, to whom Catherine certainly owed her throne, was remarkable for her talents and her eccen-

* This annual dinner was discontinued when it had been sufficiently talked of.

† Life of Catherine II., vol. ii. p. 313.

tricties, and possessed some fine and generous qualities ; but there were differences of character between her and the empress, to say nothing of the difference of position, which rendered an equal and lasting friendship impossible ; and though no ill-treatment or coldness seems to have shaken the steadiness of the attachment of Princess Dashkoff to Catherine as her sovereign, a mutual coolness and mistrust took place, and the princess retired to her estate near Moscow. After a while, Catherine finding herself beset by conspiracies, and either feeling some suspicion of her former confidant, or some want of her energetic councils, wrote her a long letter of several pages, full of flattery and eloquence, appealing to recollections of former friendship, and conjuring her to disclose what she knew of the conspiracies against her. The princess is said to have replied in four lines : —“ Madam, I have heard of nothing : if I had heard anything, I should take good care how I spoke of it. What is it you require of me ? that I should expire on a scaffold ? I am ready to mount it.”*

Catherine was disconcerted, but not intimidated by this display of spirit ; she allowed her friend to spend a few years in travelling about Europe, whence she returned to court,† received many rich presents, and was appointed president of the academy, which she contrived during her rule to render as ridiculous as useless. From motives of avarice, she would not allow the stoves to be lighted in winter, that she might pocket the price of the fuel ; and we have a very graphic description of this virago presiding in her academy, wrapped up in her rich furs, in the midst of a few starved and shivering doctors

* In former editions of this book, much injustice was done to Princess Dashkoff ; the historians of Catherine’s reign, those best accredited, appear to have mistaken her motives and character. Her autobiography has been recently published, and though by no means satisfactory as to particular facts, or explanatory of her share in certain dark passages of Catherine’s reign, it leaves on the whole a more favourable impression of her personal character, than if she had given us whole pages or chapters of self-exculpation ; she appears to have been a genuine and noble-minded woman, gifted with great talents and strong affections : as much a despot in principle and temper as her imperial mistress, but after a far different fashion. She died in 1810.

† In 1773. *Vide* Life of Catherine.

(for all who dared to absent themselves, did so), commanding the professors as if they had been troopers, and treating the sciences as if they had been her slaves. Catherine herself had no real love for any of those arts which soften, purify, or elevate the mind; and if she patronized them, it was not with a view to humanize and enlighten her people, but merely as subservient to her state, her personal vanity, and her power.* Not only had she no taste for music, but she was destitute of ear to distinguish 'one tune from another, as she often frankly acknowledged; but nothing less would serve her than an Italian *corps d'opéra* attached to her domestic establishment; a Cimarosa or a Sarti to direct her concerts; and the Gabrielli, or Mara, or Gasparini to sing for her. She had no taste for painting; yet she purchased at a high price some beautiful collections, particularly the Houghton collection from England, and that of Crozat from Paris. In the gallery of her palace of the Hermitage hung some magnificent specimens of the Italian and Flemish schools, purchased in France and Italy;† yet she was singularly impassive to all the pleasure they could bestow. In the room in which she habitually dined hung two pictures which Casanova had painted by her order, in honour of Potemkin and Suvaroff. One represented the siege of Otchakoff, the other the assault of Ismail. In both, the carnage and the physical horrors of those scenes were represented with such hideous truth that few, except Catherine herself, could look on them without shuddering; to her they were merely trophies of her conquests, and grateful memorials of her power. Dr. Clarke, in his "Travels," remarks the tawdry taste of her splendid palaces, which in their interior decorations absolutely realized the tales of oriental fable. We read of gardens and pleasure-grounds enclosed with glass, where, in the depth of an arctic winter, reigned the verdure and the temperature of summer, and "all the bloom and ravishment of spring;" we read of chambers roofed and walled with

* "Je convenais avec elle, qu'elle n'avait pas de connaissance en peinture ni en musique; je lui prouvai même un jour plus qu'elle ne voulait que son goût en bâtimens était médiocre." (*Vide Mémoires et Lettres du Prince de Ligne.*)

† Coxe's Travels in Russia, vol. ii. p. 143, 5th edit.

amber, or floored with mosaic, composed of the most rare and precious woods, at the price of one hundred roubles the square foot. At Czarskosélo, Dr. Clarke saw a room of which the walls, instead of being hung with silk or paper, "were entirely covered with fine pictures, by the best Flemish and other masters. They were fitted together without frames, so as to cover on each side the whole of the walls, without the smallest attention to disposition or general effect. But to consummate the vandalism of those who directed the work, when they found a place they could not conveniently fill, the pictures were cut in order to adapt them to the accidental spaces thus left. The soldiers of Mummis at the sacking of Corinth would have been puzzled to contrive more ingenious destruction of the fine arts." *

Catherine, in one respect, showed herself much superior to Frederic the Great. Frederic, while he encouraged French authors and French literature, openly contemned the language and literature of his own country; and while such men as Kant, Gellert, Lessing, Klopstock, Gleim, were struggling into fame, he contented himself with flattering and pensioning Voltaire and others of his set. Catherine acted with better sense and taste. Besides being well studied in all the arts of popularity, she had really a larger mind and a more liberal spirit than Frederic. She too was fond of French literature; wrote and spoke the language with purity and elegance; nor was she sparing of gifts and flattery to those writers whose praise she wished to win or purchase. But she also cultivated and encouraged the language and literature of her adopted country, and composed in the Russ language with great facility and elegance.† The best Russian authors of her time were Lomonozof, the first lyric poet of Russia; Sumorokof, their best dramatic author; Kheraskof, a writer of tragedies and ro-

* Clarke's Travels, Part I. p. 19.

† She instituted a fund for translating foreign and classical works into the Russian language; and a list of these translations, completed before the year 1790, may be found in Coxe's "Travels." I do not think that entire credit can be given to this list; for it includes some works which were not translated till lately. (*Vide Foreign Quarterly Review*, No. 2.)

mances, and the author of the first Russian epic poem :* Prince Sherebetoff, their best historian, and the celebrated naturalist, Professor Pallas ; all these received from Catherine pensions and honours, or gifts in jewels and money. Her patronage of the native poets and writers of Russia was the more remarkable, and not less praiseworthy, because it was from a principle of royal munificence, and not from any genuine taste. Catherine, defective in ear, in sensibility, in imagination, had herself no idea of poetry, or even of the harmony of verse.† She was once, indeed, seized with a fancy for making French verses, and thought she had but to *will* it, to accomplish it. Ségur spent ten days in trying to teach her the rules of rhyme and composition ; but it was time lost : the utmost effort of her genius was to produce a foolish couplet on the death of a lap-dog, which had bit her physician, Dr. Rogerson. This specimen of imperial verse-making ran thus :—

“ Ci-gît la Duchesse Anderson,
Qui mordit Monsieur Rogerson.”

Catherine was rather piqued at her ill-success ; but her courtiers consoled her ; and Ségur gallantly informed his mighty pupil, that she must absolutely resign herself to the necessity of making laws and conquests—*in prose*.

Catherine has, notwithstanding, some claims to authorship. She composed, with the assistance of her secretary, Derjawn, several little dramatic pieces. One of these, in the Russian language, was very remarkable, as being, perhaps, the first instance of a species of dramatic entertainment which has since become popular, both in France and England. It was entitled “The History of Oleg ;”‡ and was properly neither

* An interesting account of some other poets of Catherine’s time may be found in Bowring’s “Russian Anthology.”

† “Son cerveau, tout rempli de raison et de politique, ne trouvait point d’images pour enrichir ses pensées.” “Je crois qu’il était difficile de rencontrer une oreille moins sensible à l’harmonie des vers.” (Ségur, Mémoires, vol. iii. p. 72.)

‡ Oleg, one of the earliest heroes of the Russian history, lived about 861, nearly contemporary with Charlemagne and Alfred. He was regent of Russia during the minority of the Grand Duke Igor (or George).

tragedy, comedy, nor melodrame ; but a series of acts or scenes, representing the principal events in the life of Oleg. For instance, in the first act Oleg founds the city of Moscow. In the second he places on the throne his ward Igor, and marries him to a beautiful princess. In the third act he is master of Constantinople, where he obliges Leo, the Emperor of the East, to make a peace. In the last act Oleg is gratified with a series of festivals, given in his honour at Constantinople ; and, in conclusion, he takes his leave of the Greek emperor, after suspending his buckler to a column in the Hippodrome of Constantinople, as a trophy of his expedition, and an encouragement to his successors to return thither at some future period. It is difficult to imagine where Catherine found the model of this production ; perhaps in the early dramas of Russia. It was represented on the theatre at Petersburg in 1794, with unexampled splendour ; some of the scenes and decorations were upon a scale of magnificence of which we can form no idea ; and the number of the *dramatis personæ* amounted to seven hundred.

To these few particulars it may be added, that Catherine, by the single act of allowing every individual who chose it to set up a printing-office without a licence from government, did more to advance the civilization of Russia than by all her other edicts ; and her severity towards the latter part of her reign, when enraged and terrified by the progress of the French Revolution, could not entirely undo the good she had formerly done.*

The statue of bronze erected to Peter the Great (whom she used to call her grandfather) was one of her magnificent works. She *intended* to rebuild the Kremlin ; and had also designed a road to connect these two capitals, Petersburg and Moscow : but neither of these designs was completed.

One more plume must be torn from Catherine's crest, before we have done with her personal influence and domestic government. It has been accounted a virtue in her, a trait of magnanimity, that she suffered her son to exist. Perhaps, since she detested him, since she was possessed of the throne, which was

* During the last seven or eight years of Catherine's reign Russian literature certainly declined in taste and spirit ; but it has since revived.

his by law, by right, and by inheritance, and knew him to be the idol of the populace, and an excuse, or a motive, for continual disturbances and conspiracies, we may give some credit to the mother who refrained from murdering her offspring. Catherine's letter to D'Alembert, inviting him to Russia to become the preceptor of the grand duke—a letter full of maternal tenderness, wisdom, and philosophy—was circulated through all the gazettes of Europe, translated into half a dozen languages, praised, cited, wondered at. But in what did this vain flourish end? In giving to the grand duke Paul the very worst education possible; in keeping him at a distance from her person and from the throne, surrounded by spies, and by mean and depraved persons, and often in want of everything befitting his rank as her son and successor. Thirty-four years of contempt, coldness, and restraint so crushed the heart and spirit of this unfortunate prince, that, from a good-natured and intelligent being, he was at length perverted into a stupid, irritable, vengeful maniac: morally speaking, Catherine murdered her son, as she had murdered his father. When, in 1780, she gave him and his consort her imperial permission to travel through Europe, he was confided to the care of one of her sworn creatures (Soltikoff), and a courier was sent off every day to Petersburg, with a minute account of all that passed.* The chamberlain Bibikof having ventured to write to the grand duke an account of what was passing at Petersburg during his absence, was detected, and sent off to Siberia for the remainder of his life. The grand duke visited Paris, where the people were more struck with his excessive ugliness than his magnificence. Being one day at the Tuilleries, Louis XVI. asked him, in the course of conversation, whether he had any person in his suite who was particularly attached to him. Paul replied, "If my mother thought that I had but a dog belonging to me that loved me, to-morrow it would be thrown into the Seine with a stone round its neck." These words, pronounced with a kind of fearful coolness, had such an effect, that the courtiers who were present, even the king himself, seemed to shrink back with horror, and for a moment there was a dead silence.†

* *Vide* Life of Catherine, vol. iii.

† *Vide* Vie de Marie Antoinette.

Catherine crowned all her moral and political delinquencies by bequeathing to her empire this mad, wretched, and perverted being,* who in the course of four short years overturned all that she had done for good, and exceeded all that she had committed of evil.

A short sketch of Catherine's foreign policy will serve to complete this colossal picture of guilt and splendour.

From the commencement of her reign she appears to have revolved the most stupendous projects that ever entered into the head of an ambitious sovereign. She meditated the foundation of two mighty empires, to be inherited by her grandsons : hence she bestowed on them the names of Alexander and Constantine ; and in the pictures and engravings of them, published under her auspices, the one was represented as dividing the Gordian knot, the other as bearing the standard of the Greek empire, the cross of Constantine. In pursuance of the mighty plans she had formed, Catherine steadily kept in view two principal objects : first, to extend her dominions on the west, by seizing on Poland ; and secondly, to drive the Turks from Constantinople.†

She began with Poland : under colour of friendship, she sent an army into that country, and forced upon the Poles a king of her own choice, whom she knew to be weak, and believed to be devoted to her interests.‡ She dictated laws to them at the point of the bayonet ; controlled the Diet ; purchased the venal with bribes, intimidated the weak by threats, and massacred or sent into exile all who resisted.

It has been already related that the treaty for the dismemberment of Poland was first proposed by Prince Henry of Prussia in 1769. "If Maria Theresa," says the author of the *Life of Catherine*, "had been still sole possessor of the German empire, they would not, perhaps, have succeeded in making her a sharer in so unjust a spoliation. Her son, Joseph II., was

* She did not bequeath the empire to *him*, but had she lived would probably have altered the succession.

† It should seem that in these days (1834) Catherine's vast plans to dismember and weaken the Turkish empire, and erect Egypt into a separate and independent kingdom, are about to be realized.

‡ Stanislas Poniatowski, her former lover.

not so difficult. Turkey, France, England, might also have maintained the treaties of which they were the guarantees ; but these powers were so easily deceived, or so indifferent to the fate of other nations, that Catherine said to Prince Henry, " I will frighten Turkey, and I will flatter England ; do you take upon you to gain over Austria, that she may amuse France."

The dastardly policy of these courts is the best excuse that can be made for the imperial insolence of Catherine.

The Poles, however, did not tamely submit to this usurpation of their country, nor were they inclined to suffer a foreign army to dictate laws to them in their capital. They rose against the Russians, and, had they not been divided by fierce factions among their own nobility, would probably have succeeded in driving out the Russians. From 1765, when Catherine first invaded the country, till its final seizure in 1795, Poland presented a scene of horror, calamity, and crime that can hardly bear description ; mutual animosity was increased by mutual treachery and cruelty. The generals to whom the empress delegated her power acted like barbarians, as in fact they were ; and the enormities committed by Soltikoff, Drevitch, and Repnin have devoted their names, next to that of their imperial mistress, to universal detestation. The Poles besought the interference and aid of the Turks, who beheld with jealousy the ambition of the empress : and this was the occasion of the first Turkish war, declared in 1768. Catherine conferred the principal command on Marshal Romantzoff, the greatest of all her generals ;* and he took the field with an army of 150,000 men. The Turks opposed their enemies with great bravery and obstinacy, and gained considerable advantages against Prince Galitzen ; but they were unable to resist the superior skill and discipline of the Russians. Romantzoff defeated them in two great battles, fought on the banks of the Pruth, and the provinces of Wallachia, Moldavia, and Bessarabia submitted to the arms of Catherine. She had conceived the bold idea of dismembering the Greek islands and the

* Romantzoff, the only really great man in Catherine's service, passed the last years of his life in disgrace, and in a species of exile, because Potemkin hated him, and was jealous of his abilities.

Morea from the Ottoman empire, and had induced the Greeks to rise against their Turkish masters, by the most lavish promises of aid and protection. In 1770 she sent a squadron into the Archipelago, and on the 6th of July in the same year was fought the memorable battle of Tchesmè, between the Russian and the Turkish fleets. The latter, commanded by the famous Captain Pacha Hassan, was completely destroyed, and the Russians remained masters of the Grecian seas. The empress chose to ascribe this triumph to Alexey Orloff, and in consequence he was loaded with honours ; but it is generally admitted that he had no claim to it whatever, and that the victory was owing to three English officers in the service of Catherine, Admirals Elphinstone, Creig, and Dugdale. In 1774 the Turks were obliged to sue for peace : among other humiliating conditions, Catherine demanded that the Ottoman Porte should recognise the independence of the Crimea, and yield to her vessels the free navigation of the Black Sea and the Archipelago, which opened an immense source of commerce and riches to the Russian empire. No mention was made of the Greeks, who were left to their fate. The Grand Signior resolved to punish their rebellion by a war of extermination : many thousands were massacred, and this devoted people were saved at last, not by the interference of their protectress Catherine, who first incited them to the revolt and then abandoned them, but by the intercession of the brave Hassan, who gained for them an act of amnesty.

Thus ended the first Turkish war, in which the empress gained great glory and many advantages for her people : but it was a war undertaken on unjust grounds ; it cost the lives of about 200,000 men, and left her finances in a very exhausted state, which many new and oppressive taxes could scarce replenish.

The year 1774 is also remarkable for the disgrace of Gregory Orloff, and the elevation of Potemkin, afterwards so famous as Prince Potemkin, who for more than twenty years maintained the post of favourite and chief minister to Catherine.

At the period of her accession Potemkin, who was then about eighteen, and only a lieutenant in the Guards, had attracted the notice of Catherine by his gallantry and his fine

person. Within twelve years afterwards, he was raised to the highest honours of the empire. He was neither a great statesman nor a great general, but he was certainly a most extraordinary man. He had all the petulance, audacity, and wilfulness of a great spoiled boy ; yet possessed a genius fitted to conceive and execute the greatest designs. His character displayed a singular union of barbarism and grandeur, and of the most inconsistent, and apparently incompatible, qualities. He was at once the most indolent and the most active man in the world ; the most luxurious and the most indefatigable ; no dangers appalled, and no difficulties repulsed him ; yet the slightest caprice, a mere fit of temper, would cause him to abandon projects of vital importance. At one time he talked of making himself King of Poland ; at another of turning monk or bishop. "He began everything, completed nothing ; disordered the finances, disorganized the army, depopulated the country." He lived with the magnificence of a sovereign prince, and was supposed to be the richest and most powerful individual in Europe ; general officers attended on him as his *valets de chambre*, and he not unfrequently boxed their ears with impunity : one moment he would make an aide-de-camp ride two or three hundred miles to bring him a melon or a pineapple ; another time he would be found devouring a raw carrot or cucumber in his own antechamber. He had scarcely ever opened a book, yet he learned everything, and forgot nothing ; his wonderful quickness in appropriating the knowledge of others served him instead of study. Altogether, his great qualities and his defects precisely fitted him to obtain the ascendancy over such a mind as that of Catherine : she grew tired of others ; but his caprices, his magnificent spirit, and his gigantic plans continually interested and occupied her. It is true, as the author of her life observed, that under Potemkin's administration all things did not go on well, but all *went on*,—"le petit ménage allait son train,"—and the empress desired no more.

Potemkin was the means of connecting Catherine politically with Joseph II., Emperor of Germany ; a conference between them took place at Mohilef, and Joseph afterwards visited the empress at Petersburg ; there they concerted measures

against the Ottomans, and there unhappy Poland was devoted to ultimate destruction.

It had long been one of Catherine's favourite projects to seize on the Crimea, and annex it to Russia: and she thus achieved her purpose, after keeping it steadily in view for several years. Civil wars and commotions were fomented by her emissaries, until that beautiful peninsula was almost desolated: then she made the disturbances she had herself occasioned the excuse for seizing on the country, as the best means of restoring tranquillity. By a manifesto published in 1783 the Crimea and the Kuban, under the classical names of Taurida and the Caucasus, were annexed to her own dominions, and have ever since remained a part of the Russian empire.

About the same time died the two chiefs of that conspiracy which had placed Catherine on her throne—Count Panin and Prince Gregory Orloff. Panin, who could not endure to see his counsels slighted for those of Potemkin, died of chagrin and disappointment. The close of Orloff's career was much more terrible: though raised from obscurity to princely honours and almost boundless wealth, he was never satisfied; he beheld with jealousy every new court favourite, and the rise of Potemkin threw him into despair. The loss of a young wife, whom he loved with all the passionate fervour of his character, completed his distraction. He was seized with fits of insanity, in which he imagined himself haunted by the spectre of the Czar Peter. His ravings and furious reproaches filled Catherine with horror, and the whole court with consternation: he was sent off to Moscow, under proper restraint, and died in a paroxysm of madness.

In the beginning of the year 1787 Potemkin persuaded Catherine to go and admire herself in her new dominions, and be crowned Queen of Taurida. This famous journey, of which we have a particular account, exceeded in magnificence, ostentation, and extravagance anything recorded in history since the days of the ancient Persian monarchs. It has been compared to the voyage of Cleopatra down the Cydnus, with this distinction, that its purpose was not to enchain a conqueror, but to rivet the chains of the conquered. The whole journey might form, in its theatrical pomp

and grandeur, a very apt illustration of Catherine's reign and government.

She set off from Petersburg on the 18th of January, 1787, attended by her favourite aide-de-camp, Momonoff, the great officers of her household, the French, English, and Austrian ministers,* and a numerous suite. The imperial *cortège* consisted of fourteen carriages upon sledges, for the empress and her court; followed by one hundred and sixty others, for the attendants and baggage. Five hundred and sixty relays of horses awaited them at every post; and like a fleet of light vessels over an icy sea, these luxurious carriages glided, or rather flew, over the frozen plains, at the rate of a hundred miles a day.† It was winter—a Russian winter of snows and twilight. On each side of the road immense piles of trees were set on fire, and created an artificial day. Wherever the empress stopped to repose, a temporary palace was erected for her reception, consisting of numerous apartments, corresponding as much as possible with the interior arrangement of her palace at Petersburg; fitted up with every luxury, and closed from all intrusion of the elements. Here, surrounded by her gay flatterers, the empress gave an occasional ball, or received a deputation, or feasted her court; while the peasants assembled on the outside, stared upon the magic creation which had risen amid their deserts, with open mouths, and hair and beards standing on end with the frost.

When they arrived at Khief, the empress embarked on the Dnieper, and with a fleet of fifty galleys sailed down the river to Cherson. All that the ardent imagination of Potemkin could conceive, all that his unlimited power could execute, was assembled to enchant the senses and flatter the inordinate self-love of his sovereign, and render this voyage celebrated to the latest posterity. Thither were conveyed, from every part of the empire, money, provisions, and troops; the Borysthènes was covered with magnificent galleys; a hundred and fifty thousand soldiers were newly equipped; clouds of Cossacks were seen careering over the plains; the Tartars

* Philippe, Comte de Ségur; Mr. Fitzherbert, since Lord St. Helens; and the Baron de Cobentzel.

† Between nine in the morning and seven in the evening.

were clothed and disciplined; deserts were peopled for the occasion, and palaces raised for the reception of the monarch in the midst of trackless wilds; the desolation of the country was disguised by villages built on purpose, and people dressed up to represent peasants were seen dancing to the sound of music, in districts which war and rapacity had laid waste, and where the miserable inhabitants were in reality starving. The King of Poland came to do homage to her who had given him his crown, and who afterwards tore it from his brow. The Emperor Joseph himself attended on the triumphal progress of the Empress Catherine, and was content to mingle among the herd of her courtiers, and to swell the splendour of her state.

Catherine herself neglected nothing to gain popularity and produce an effect. She bestowed diamonds, ribbons, honours, and presents with all her usual grace and liberality.* In her travelling carriage she had a large green sack full of gold coins, and her courtiers were employed in flinging handfuls out of the window to the people, who lay grovelling on the earth as her carriage passed by.†

In the Crimea she received the homage of the Tartar chiefs, and distributed favours and presents with a lavish hand. She also endeavoured to please the people, who are Mahometans, by founding two mosques. Six weeks after her departure they were in open revolt, and the half of them massacred before tranquillity could be restored.

On her way back the empress was conducted by Pultowa. Here two armies suddenly appeared; they met, they engaged, and gave Catherine an exact representation in mimic fight of that famous battle in which Charles XII. of Sweden was defeated by Peter the Great.

The empress returned to Petersburg after an absence of six months; and the result of this magnificent journey was another Turkish war, which commenced the same year (1787).

This war was encouraged by Prince Potemkin from a private motive: though loaded with titles and honours, he had not yet

* "Notre Cléopâtre," says the Prince de Ligne, in a tone half raillery, half compliment, "n'avale pas des perles; mais elle en donne beaucoup."

† *Vide Mémoires et Lettres du Prince de Ligne*, vol. i. p. 138.

received the order of St. George, because, to wear the decoration of this military order, it was necessary to have commanded an army, and gained a victory. Thus, to gratify the puerile fancy of the favourite for an additional star and ribbon, a war was commenced which cost the lives of some millions of men.

But in the meantime Catherine was threatened with danger from an unexpected quarter. Gustavus III. of Sweden suddenly declared war against her; and while the principal part of the Russian army was engaged in the south, he attacked her on the north, and even threatened her in her capital. But Catherine was not dismayed; she possessed in the highest degree the virtues of courage, firmness, and promptitude in action: in a few weeks she sent an army into Finland, and a fleet into the Baltic. The Swedes were, at first, rather successful; but Gustavus was unpopular in his own kingdom, and disliked by his troops: in the end he was defeated in several engagements by sea and land, and a treaty, which left things precisely as they were before, put an end to hostilities.

The Turkish war proceeded. Potemkin, to whom nothing was denied, took the field in 1788, with 150,000 men. Romantsoff, Repnin, and Suvaroff, all celebrated generals, served with him or under him. The great fortress of Otchakoff, on the Black Sea, was first taken, and the inhabitants given up to general slaughter; 25,000 Turks were massacred, and the Russians lost 12,000 men in the assault. The empress distributed the most magnificent rewards on this occasion, in estates, money, diamonds, and orders of knighthood, and excited her generals and troops to fresh exertions. The rest of the war was a series of victories. Almost every town that was taken was reduced to ashes, and the people massacred. The ferocious Suvaroff, and the yet more barbarous Kamensky, spread desolation everywhere, plundering and slaughtering without control and without mercy, while Catherine was amusing herself in her capital, giving balls, distributing diamonds, and singing *Te Deums* in honour of their victories.

But one of the most tremendous events of this war was the siege and capture of Ismail, in 1790. Potemkin had spent seven months before this place, and the inhabitants still held out. At last, grown impatient, he sent orders to Suvaroff to take the city within three days. Suvaroff immediately ordered

the assault, in which 15,000 Russians fell ; but the place was taken, plundered, burnt, and 25,000 men, women, and children massacred. After the carnage of this horrible day Suvaroff wrote to Catherine, "Glory to God, and to the empress ! Ismail is taken."

Potemkin returned to Petersburg in 1791, and Catherine received him with transports of joy, made him a present of a magnificent palace, and a coat laced with diamonds, which cost 50,000*l.* ; but even at this time, and at the height of his prosperity and grandeur, Potemkin was perhaps one of the most miserable of men. He had accomplished all he desired ; there was nothing left for him to wish for ; he was satiated with honours and pleasures, worn out with dissipation, sick of himself, his greatness, and his victories. Bloated and pampered by every vice, he became restless, moody, melancholy, and would often sigh, and even shed tears, like a peevish child. In this state of mind he again left Petersburg, in order to meet the Turkish emissaries. Some overtures had been made for a cessation of hostilities, and Catherine, whose empire had been almost ruined by her successes, accepted the mediation of the British court, and consented to a peace, which was afterwards concluded at Yassy, in 1791.

This war cost the lives of 130,000 Austrians, 200,000 Russians, and 330,000 Turks, the destruction of many cities, the miseries of famine and pestilence in those provinces which were the seat of war, and the waste of millions of treasure ; in other respects, the countries engaged in it remained nearly in the same state as before. Prince Potemkin, who had originally caused the war, had not the glory or the satisfaction of concluding a peace. While travelling between Yassy and Nicholaef he was seized with indisposition, and being taken out of his carriage and laid on the grass by the way-side, he died there in the arms of his niece, the Countess Branicka. He was buried at Cherson,* and the empress planned a magnificent monument to his memory, which was never even commenced.

* On the accession of the Emperor Paul, orders were received at Cherson to take up the body of Potemkin, and cast it into the first hole that might be found. These orders were implicitly obeyed. A hole was dug in the fosse, into which he was thrown with as little ceremony

Catherine the Great* did not long survive her favourite: but she had time to add one more to the list of her great political sins, by the final partition of Poland. She made a treaty with Frederic William, King of Prussia, by which they divided between them all that remained of that wretched country. The King of Poland, a feeble and worthless man, was sent into captivity, and most of the Polish nobility, bought by the gold or intimidated by the threats of Catherine, assisted in enslaving and betraying their country. Others, more generous, rose in defence of their liberties; the gallant Kosciusko raised a little army of devoted men, and the Russians, notwithstanding their superiority of numbers, were several times defeated: but Catherine and the King of Prussia had immense resources at their command, and Poland was soon overrun by their vast armies. Kosciusko was overpowered by numbers, his friends cut to pieces, and himself, covered with wounds, was taken prisoner, and afterwards sent to Siberia. The few Poles who still held out retired to Warsaw, and shut themselves up in Praga, a small suburb of that city. Suvaroff, coming up, ordered a general massacre, not only of the soldiers who had resisted, but of all the inhabitants, without distinction of age or sex: even women and helpless children found no mercy. Thirty thousand people fell victims to his fury; and after this terrible day no further resistance was made. Catherine and Frederic divided the rest of Poland between them, and all Europe looked on passively while this great act of injustice and robbery was openly committed.

Catherine next seized upon the Duchy of Courland, and those of the nobles who resisted this appropriation were proscribed and exiled to Siberia; their possessions were confiscated, and bestowed by Catherine on her courtiers and favourites. Yet

as a dead dog: and afterwards no one dared to mention the name of Potemkin.

The reader need hardly be reminded, that not far from this place rests the body of Howard the Good: "as if," says Dr. Clarke, "the hand of destiny had directed two persons, in whom were exemplified the extremes of virtue and vice, to one common spot, in order that the contrast might remain a lesson for mankind." (Travels, vol. i. p. 603.)

* The Prince de Ligne used to call her Catherine *le Grand*; an untranslateable compliment, if it be a compliment.

all this was not enough ! Though around her none moved or breathed but by her sovereign will—though the Turks, humbled into suppliants, crouched beneath her sceptre—though unhappy Poland lay at her feet, bleeding and palpitating like a victim newly slain—still, while there existed upon earth a power that could brave or equal her own, her all-devouring ambition cried out for new sacrifices ;—insatiate as the Giaour in “ Caliph Vathek,” she still exclaimed, “ More ! more ! ” She had commenced hostilities with Persia, preparatory to her great and favourite scheme of erecting the Greek provinces into an empire for the Grand Duke Constantine. She was immersed in a series of dark and treacherous plots to gain the ascendancy over the government of Sweden. She meditated vengeance against Prussia. She had resolved a war of extermination against the French Republic, which she regarded with a mixture of terror and detestation.

“ Ah ! wherefore does the Northern conqueress stay ?

Groans not her chariot on its onward way ? ” *

No ! in mercy to mankind, the hand of Heaven interposed, to arrest her mad and guilty career. When Cæsar was asked what death he esteemed the happiest, he replied, “ the most sudden.” It is on this principle, I presume, that the death of Catherine has been pronounced *happy*, because it was instantaneous ; but there is something in the idea of this terrible and depraved old woman, hurried out of the world with all her sins upon her head, without a moment granted to think, to prepare, to repent, which fills the mind with dread and horror.

The circumstances which were the remote, if not the immediate cause of her death, were extremely characteristic. Catherine had long resolved that one of her granddaughters should be Queen of Sweden. Although the young king Gustavus Adolphus was already affianced to a Princess of Mecklenburg, she contrived to have this marriage broken off ; and at length prevailed on the Regent Duke of Sudermania, the uncle and guardian of the king, to bring his ward to Petersburg : once there, she reckoned on her own consummate address, and the charms of the intended bride, to accomplish the rest.

The Grand Duchess Alexandrina was selected to be the future Queen of Sweden. She was just fifteen, but with a mind and

* Coleridge.

person which had outgrown her years; she was tall and well formed, with noble and regular features, a profusion of beautiful hair, and eyes that beamed with intelligence and sensibility. Her governess, Mademoiselle Villanof, had educated her in retirement, and with the most devoted care and affection; and in person, manners, and mind Alexandrina was at this time one of the most lovely and accomplished princesses in Europe.

The young King of Sweden was about eighteen; he was well-looking and well-bred, with a fine martial presence, and frank, captivating manners. By the arts of their attendants, the imaginations of both were inflamed; they were allowed to suspect that they were intended for each other: they soon became mutually and strongly attached; and Catherine hoped to make the feelings of these youthful and innocent beings subservient to her ambitious and crooked policy.

Proposals of marriage were speedily made; the treaty drawn up; the day of betrothment fixed, and a splendid fête prepared for the occasion. The morning arrived, and Catherine had assembled all her family and court in her presence-chamber; Alexandrina, adorned in bridal pomp, stood at her side; all was in readiness; but still the royal bridegroom appeared not; they waited—there was a chill and ominous silence—the bride turned pale—the sovereign turned *red*—and the courtiers looked upon each other.

The articles of marriage had been carried to the young king for his signature. Perhaps Catherine supposed that, enamoured as he was, and in the hurry of the moment, he would not have paid particular attention to their tenor. She was mistaken: the Chancellor, Markoff, read them over quickly, as if a mere matter of form; but the king, who listened, became aware that certain articles were introduced which had not been previously agreed upon. By a fundamental law of Sweden, the queen of that country must necessarily profess the faith of the nation, and exchange the Greek for the Lutheran Church; just as Catherine herself had formerly exchanged the Lutheran for the Greek persuasion, in obedience to the law of Russia. The empress, not from principle, but from pride and arbitrary power, was resolved that *her* imperial granddaughter should be made an exception to this law; and had introduced into the marriage treaty a clause to that purpose. The king expressed

his disapprobation, and refused to sign the contract. The ministers of Catherine, thunderstruck by this resistance to the will of their despotic sovereign, under such circumstances, and on the part of a mere boy, knew not what course to take; they flattered, they entreated, they implored him only to sign the paper, and leave the matter to be arranged afterwards, promising that his wishes should be acceded to in everything. But Gustavus was immovable; and, enraged by the attempt to deceive him, he at length flung from them, repeating, "Non ! je ne veux pas ! je ne le puis pas ! je ne signerai point !" and shut himself up in his own apartment. It was some time before any one dared to tell the empress of this unexpected *contretemps*: at length her favourite, Zuboff, approached, and whispered to her. She made an effort to rise; but staggered, and the blood settled in her face. She had still power over herself; and her habitual dissimulation was never more needed. She uttered a few words, dismissing her court, under pretence that the King of Sweden was suddenly indisposed, and then retired to her cabinet.

Alexandrina, who was the real victim in this extraordinary affair, was led back to her apartment, where she fainted away, and afterwards abandoned herself to grief.* With her a softer and more heartfelt sorrow mingled with deep mortification and wounded pride; but Catherine, the imperial, imperious Catherine—what were her sensations! Braved on her throne, insulted in her court, overreached in her policy, she could only sustain herself by the hope of vengeance. Pride and state etiquette forbade any expression of temper, but the effect on her frame was perhaps the more fatal. The King of Sweden took his departure a few days afterwards,† and Catherine, who from that instant meditated his destruction, was preparing all the resources of her great empire for war—war on every side—when the death-stroke came, and she fell, like a sorceress, suffocated among her own poisons. On the morning of the 9th of November, 1796, she was found stretched on the floor of her

* Alexandrina was afterwards married to the Archduke Joseph of Austria, uncle to the present emperor. She fell into a decline, and died in 1801, at the age of nineteen.

† About the middle of September 1796. He was deposed in 1809, and afterwards led a wandering life through Europe.

closet, struck by apoplexy. All attempts to reanimate her were in vain ; and she expired the following day, without uttering a syllable, or giving the slightest indication of returning sense. She was in her sixty-seventh year, and had reigned thirty-four years.

This woman, whose political crimes have consigned her to universal execration, whose private vices cannot be contemplated without the deepest disgust and abhorrence, seems to have possessed all the blandishment and graces of an accomplished Frenchwoman. Under some points of view she presents herself to the fancy more like an ogress or a fury, grim, foul, and horrible, than anything feminine or human ; and yet in her personal deportment, and in the circle of her court, she was kind, easy, and good-humoured. Her serenity of temper and composure of manner were so remarkable, that the Prince de Ligne used to call her "*Votre Imperturbabilité :*" and the contrast, between the simplicity and gaiety of her deportment in private and the grandeur of her situation rendered her exceedingly fascinating. She possessed so many accomplishments ; she was so elegant, playful, and dignified ; she performed with such majesty and decorum all the external functions of royalty, that none approached her without respect and admiration ; and from the chivalrous De Ligne, the courtier, scholar, soldier, down to the vulgar, ferocious buffoon Suvaroff, she captivated the love and service of those who surrounded her. In her presence all were at ease with themselves and with her : she was a most kind and liberal mistress, and in the midst of her despotism displayed at times a degree of indulgence and magnanimity which appears almost unaccountable.* She never hesitated at any act of atrocity, cruelty, or injustice which could further her designs or secure her power ; yet she could forgive a personal affront, and seldom punished, even when most provoked.

She was handsome when young : her features were regular ; her eyes were blue and penetrating, her brow expanded and expressive of intellect : but the lower part of her face was not pleasing ; it was gross and heavy, and there was a sinister

* She used to say, "*J'aime à récompenser tout haut et à punir tout bas.*" She occasionally flogged her maids of honour : but it must be confessed they deserved it from any hand but hers.

expression about the corners of her mouth, except when she smiled. Her countenance was impassible, and never betrayed what she felt or thought ; her figure was rather below than above the middle size, but she carried her head so high, and moved with such peculiar grace and dignity, that it was difficult not to imagine her tall. Towards the end of her life she wore a great quantity of paint, and was anxious to conceal the wrinkles with which Time had furrowed her once clear and beautiful complexion.

She was always dressed with elegance as well as magnificence ; and the Russian costume being more becoming to her person than the French fashion, she had the good taste to adopt it, and to adhere to it.

Catherine was succeeded by her son Paul : one of his first acts was to publish a ukase, which had been drawn up, and secreted, some years before the death of his mother, and which confined the future succession of the throne to the male heirs of his family. He also called in the paper money and debased coinage, by which the country had been overflowed in the time of the empress. Some other acts of good sense and humanity raised the hopes of his people ; but they were quickly annihilated by his frantic tyranny. What Dr. Johnson would call "the flying vapours of incipient madness" settled into a terrible and hopeless insanity. If Paul had been a private individual, he would have been consigned to Bedlam and a strait-waistcoat ; but being an emperor, and an emperor of Russia, it was found necessary to destroy him like a rabid animal : he was accordingly murdered in his chamber, with circumstances of peculiar barbarity, and was succeeded by his eldest son Alexander, in 1801.

The Emperor of Russia, Nicholas I., was the grandson of Catherine. The Princess of Orange, and the Grand Duchess of Weimar, are her granddaughters ; the Duchess of Oldenburg, who visited England in 1815, and afterwards became Queen of Wurtemberg, was another of the granddaughters of Catherine, and greatly resembled her grandmother in person, in talents, and in ambition.

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